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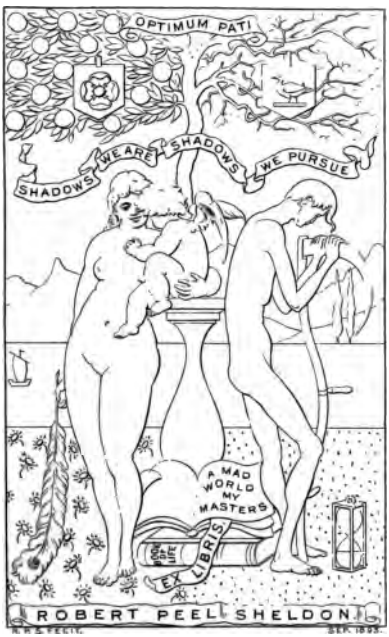
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WAVERLEY NOVELS

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VOL. XL.

WOODSTOCK.

[illegible]

A. & C. BLACK, EDINBURGH.

J. Inskipp. Ang.s Fox.

WOODSTOCK.

'His daughter took some needle-work, and bringing it close by the old man's side, employed her fingers on this task, bending her eyes from time to time on her parent'.

A. & C. BLACK, EDINBURGH.

WAVERLEY NOVELS.

VOL. XL.

WOODSTOCK.

As Phœbe Mayflower was reflecting Fortune was making amends to send [illegible] to the fountain. She encouraged herself however and resolved to show no sense of fear.

[illegible] EDINBURGH.

THE

WAVERLEY NOVELS

BY

SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART

VOL. XL.

WOODSTOCK—II.

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WOODSTOCK;

OR

THE CAVALIER.

A TALE OF THE YEAR SIXTEEN HUNDRED AND FIFTY-ONE.

CHAPTER THE NINETEENTH.

> Being skilless in these parts, which, to a stranger,
> Unguided and unfriended, often prove
> Rough and inhospitable.
>
> TWELFTH NIGHT.

THERE was a little attempt at preparation, now that the dinner hour was arrived, which shewed that, in the opinion of his few but faithful domestics, the good knight had returned in triumph to his home.

The great tankard, exhibiting in bas-relief the figure of Michael subduing the Arch-enemy, was placed on the table, and Joceline and Phœbe dutifully attended; the one behind the chair of Sir Henry, the other to wait upon her young mistress, and both to make out, by formal and regular observance, the want of a more numerous train.

"A health to King Charles!" said the old knight, handing the massive tankard to his daughter; "drink it, my love, though it be rebel ale which they have left us. I will pledge thee; for the toast will excuse the liquor, had Noll himself brewed it."

The young lady touched the goblet with her lip, and returned it to her father, who took a copious draught.

"I will not say blessing on their hearts," said he; "though I must own they drank good ale."

"No wonder, sir; they come lightly by the malt, and need not spare it," said Joceline.

"Say'st thou?" said the knight; "thou shalt finish the tankard thyself for that very jest's sake."

Nor was his follower slow in doing reason to the royal pledge. He bowed, and replaced the tankard, saying, after a triumphant glance at the sculpture, "I had a gibe with that same red-coat about the Saint Michael just now."

"Red-coat—ha! what red-coat?" said the hasty old man. "Do any of these knaves still lurk about Woodstock?—Quoit him down stairs instantly, Joceline.—Know we not Galloway nags?"

"So please you, he is in some charge here, and will speedily be gone.—It is he—he who had a rencontre with your honour in the wood."

"Ay, but I paid him off for it in the hall, as you yourself saw.—I was never in better fence in my life, Joceline. That same steward fellow is not so utterly black-hearted a rogue as the most of them, Joceline. He fences well—excellent well. I will have thee try a

bout in the hall with him to-morrow, though I think he will be too hard for thee. I know thy strength to an inch."

He might say this with some truth; for it was Joceline's fashion when called on, as sometimes happened, to fence with his patron, just to put forth as much of his strength and skill as obliged the knight to contend hard for the victory, which, in the long run, he always contrived to yield up to him, like a discreet serving-man.

"And what said this roundheaded steward of our great Saint Michael's standing-cup?"

"Marry, he scoffed at our good saint, and said he was little better than one of the golden calves of Bethel. But I told him he should not talk so, until one of their own roundheaded saints had given the devil as complete a cross-buttock as Saint Michael had given him, as 'tis carved upon the cup there. I trow that made him silent enough. And then he would know whether your honour and Mistress Alice, not to mention old Joan and myself, since it is your honour's pleasure I should take my bed here, were not afraid to sleep in a house that had been so much disturbed. But I told him we feared no fiends or goblins, having the prayers of the Church read every evening."

"Joceline," said Alice, interrupting him, "wert thou mad? You know at what risk to ourselves and the good doctor the performance of that duty takes place."

"Oh, Mistress Alice," said Joceline, a little abashed, "you may be sure I spoke not a word of the doctor—

No, no—I did not let him into the secret that we had such a reverend chaplain.—I think I know the length of this man's foot. We have had a jollification or so together. He is hand and glove with me, for as great a fanatic as he is."

"Trust him not too far," said the knight. "Nay, I fear thou hast been imprudent already, and that it will be unsafe for the good man to come here after nightfall, as is proposed. These Independents have noses like bloodhounds, and can smell out a loyalist under any disguise."

"If your honour thinks so," said Joceline, "I'll watch for the doctor with good will, and bring him into the Lodge by the old condemned postern, and so up to this apartment; and sure this man Tomkins would never presume to come hither; and the doctor may have a bed in Woodstock Lodge, and he never the wiser; or, if your honour does not think that safe, I can cut his throat for you, and I would not mind it a pin."

"God forbid!" said the knight. "He is under our roof, and a guest, though not an invited one.—Go, Joceline; it shall be thy penance, for having given thy tongue too much license, to watch for the good doctor, and to take care of his safety while he continues with us. An October night or two in the forest would finish the good man."

"He's more like to finish our October than our October is to finish him," said the keeper; and withdrew under the encouraging smile of his patron.

He whistled Bevis along with him to share in his

watch; and having received exact information where the clergyman was most likely to be found, assured his master that he would give the most pointed attention to his safety. When the attendants had withdrawn, having previously removed the remains of the meal, the old knight, leaning back in his chair, encouraged pleasanter visions than had of late passed through his imagination, until by degrees he was surprised by actual slumber; while his daughter, not venturing to move but on tiptoe, took some needle-work, and bringing it close by the old man's side, employed her fingers on this task, bending her eyes from time to time on her parent, with the affectionate zeal, if not the effective power, of a guardian angel. At length, as the light faded away, and night came on, she was about to order candles to be brought. But, remembering how indifferent a couch Joceline's cottage had afforded, she could not think of interrupting the first sound and refreshing sleep which her father had enjoyed, in all probability, for the last two nights and days.

She herself had no other amusement, as she sat facing one of the great oriel windows, the same by which Wildrake had on a former occasion looked in upon Tomkins and Joceline while at their compotations, than watching the clouds, which a lazy wind sometimes chased from the broad disk of the harvest-moon, sometimes permitted to accumulate, and exclude her brightness. There is, I know not why, something peculiarly pleasing to the imagination, in contemplating the Queen of Night, when she is *wading*, as the expres-

sion is, among the vapours which she has not power to dispel, and which on their side are unable entirely to quench her lustre. It is the striking image of patient virtue, calmly pursuing her path through good report and bad report, having that excellence in herself which ought to command all admiration, but bedimmed in the eyes of the world, by suffering, by misfortune, by calumny.

As some such reflections, perhaps, were passing through Alice's imagination, she became sensible, to her surprise and alarm, that some one had clambered up upon the window, and was looking into the room. The idea of supernatural fear did not in the slightest degree agitate Alice. She was too much accustomed to the place and situation; for folk do not see spectres in the scenes with which they have been familiar from infancy. But danger from marauders in a disturbed country was a more formidable subject of apprehension, and the thought armed Alice, who was naturally high-spirited, with such desperate courage, that she snatched a pistol from the wall, on which some fire-arms hung, and while she screamed to her father to awake, had the presence of mind to present it at the intruder. She did so the more readily, because she imagined she recognised in the visage, which she partially saw, the features of the woman whom she had met with at Rosamond's Well, and which had appeared to her peculiarly harsh and suspicious. Her father at the same time seized his sword and came forward, while the person at the window, alarmed at these demonstrations, and endeavour-

ing to descend, missed footing, as had Cavaliero Wildrake before, and went down to the earth with no small noise. Nor was the reception on the bosom of our common mother either soft or safe; for, by a most terrific bark and growl, they heard that Bevis had come up and seized on the party, ere he or she could gain their feet.

"Hold fast, but worry not," said the old knight.—"Alice thou art the queen of wenches! Stand fast here till I run down and secure the rascal."

"For God's sake, no, my dearest father!" Alice exclaimed; "Joceline will be up immediately—Hark—I hear him."

There was indeed a bustle below, and more than one light danced to and fro in confusion, while those who bore them called to each other, yet suppressing their voices as they spoke, as men who would only be heard by those they addressed. The individual who had fallen under the power of Bevis was most impatient in his situation, and called with least precaution,—"Here, Lee—Forester—take the dog off, else I must shoot him!"

"If thou dost," said Sir Henry from the window, "I blow thy brains out on the spot—Thieves, Joceline, thieves! come up and secure this ruffian.—Bevis, hold on!"

"Back, Bevis; down, sir," cried Joceline.—"I am coming, I am coming, Sir Henry—Saint Michael, I shall go distracted!"

A terrible thought suddenly occurred to Alice,—

could Joceline have become unfaithful, that he was calling Bevis off the villain, instead of encouraging the trusty dog to secure him! Her father, meantime, moved perhaps by some suspicion of the same kind, hastily stepped aside out of the moonlight, and pulled Alice close to him, so as to be invisible from without, yet so placed as to hear what should pass. The scuffle between Bevis and his prisoner seemed to be ended by Joceline's interference, and there was close whispering for an instant, as of people in consultation.

"All is quiet now," said one voice; "I will up and prepare the way for you."—And immediately a form presented itself on the outside of the window, pushed open the lattice, and sprung into the parlour. But almost ere his step was upon the floor, certainly before he had obtained any secure footing, the old knight, who stood ready with his rapier drawn, made a desperate pass, which bore the intruder to the ground. Joceline, who clambered up next with a dark lantern in his hand, uttered a dreadful exclamation, when he saw what had happened, crying out, "Lord in heaven, he has slain his own son!"

"No, no—I tell you no," said the fallen young man, who was indeed young Albert Lee, the only son of the old knight—"I am not hurt.—No noise on your lives —get lights instantly." At the same time, he started from the floor as quickly as he could, under the embarrassment of a cloak and doublet skewered as it were together by the rapier of the old knight, whose pass, most fortunately, had been diverted from the body of

Albert by the interruption of his cloak, the blade passing right across his back, piercing the clothes, while the hilt coming against his side with the whole force of the longe, had borne him to the ground.

Joceline all the while enjoined silence to every one, under the strictest conjurations. "Silence as you would long live on earth—silence, as you would have a place in Heaven,—be but silent for a few minutes—all our lives depend on it."

Meantime he procured lights with inexpressible despatch, and they then beheld that Sir Henry, on hearing the fatal words, had sunk back on one of the large chairs, without either motion, colour, or sign of life.

"Oh, brother, how could you come in this manner?" said Alice.

"Ask no questions—Good God! for what am I reserved!" He gazed on his father as he spoke, who, with clay-cold features rigidly fixed, and his arms extended in the most absolute helplessness, looked rather the image of death upon a monument, than a being in whom existence was only suspended. "Was my life spared," said Albert, raising his hands with a wild gesture to Heaven, "only to witness such a sight as this!"

"We suffer what Heaven permits, young man—we endure our lives while Heaven continues them. Let me approach." The same clergyman who had read the prayers at Joceline's hut now came forward. "Get water," he said, "instantly." And the helpful hand and light foot of Alice, with the ready-witted tenderness

which never stagnates in vain lamentations while there is any room for hope, provided with incredible celerity all that the clergyman called for.

"It is but a swoon," he said, on feeling Sir Henry's palm,—"a swoon produced from the instant and unexpected shock. Rouse thee up, Albert; I promise thee it will be nothing save a syncope—A cup, my dearest Alice, and a ribbon, or a bandage—I must take some blood—some aromatics, too, if they can be had, my good Alice."

But while Alice procured the cup and bandage, stripped her father's sleeve, and seemed by intuition even to anticipate every direction of the reverend doctor, her brother, hearing no word, and seeing no sign of comfort, stood with both hands clasped and elevated into the air, a monument of speechless despair. Every feature in his face seemed to express the thought, "Here lies my father's corpse, and it is I whose rashness has slain him!"

But when a few drops of blood began to follow the lancet—at first falling singly, and then trickling in a freer stream—when, in consequence of the application of cold water to the temples, and aromatics to the nostrils, the old man sighed feebly, and made an effort to move his limbs, Albert Lee changed his posture, at once to throw himself at the feet of the clergyman, and kiss, if he would have permitted him, his shoes and the hem of his raiment.

"Rise, foolish youth," said the good man, with a reproving tone; "must it be always thus with you?

Kneel to Heaven, not to the feeblest of its agents. You have been saved once again from great danger—would you deserve Heaven's bounty, remember you have been preserved for other purposes than you now think on. Begone you and Joceline, you have a duty to discharge; and be assured it will go better with your father's recovery that he see you not for a few minutes. Down—down to the wilderness, and bring in your attendant."

"Thanks, thanks, a thousand thanks," answered Albert Lee; and, springing through the lattice, he disappeared as unexpectedly as he had entered. At the same time Joceline followed him, and by the same road.

Alice, whose fears for her father were now something abated, upon this new movement among the persons of the scene, could not resist appealing to her venerable assistant. "Good doctor, answer me but one question. Was my brother Albert here just now, or have I dreamed all that has happened for these ten minutes. past? Methinks, but for your presence, I could suppose the whole had passed in my sleep—that horrible thrust —that death-like, corpse-like old man—that soldier in mute despair—I must indeed have dreamed."

"If you have dreamed, my sweet Alice," said the doctor, "I wish every sick-nurse had your property, since you have been attending to our patient better during your sleep, than most of these old dormice can do when they are most awake. But your dream came through the gate of horn, my pretty darling, which you

must remind me to explain to you at leisure. Albert has really been here, and will be here again."

"Albert!" repeated Sir Henry, "who names my son?"

"It is I, my kind patron," said the doctor; "permit me to bind up your arm."

"My wound?—with all my heart, doctor," said Sir Henry, raising himself, and gathering his recollection by degrees. "I knew of old thou wert body-curer as well as soul-curer, and served my regiment for surgeon as well as chaplain.—But where is the rascal I killed? —I never made a fairer *stramaçon* in my life. The shell of my rapier struck against his ribs. So dead he must be, or my right hand has forgot its cunning."

"Nobody was slain," said the doctor; "we must thank God for that, since there were none but friends to slay. Here is a good cloak and doublet, though, wounded in a fashion which will require some skill in tailor-craft to cure. But I was your last antagonist, and took a little blood from you, merely to prepare you for the pleasure and surprise of seeing your son, who, though hunted pretty close, as you may believe, hath made his way from Worcester hither, where, with Joceline's assistance, we will care well enough for his safety. It was even for this reason that I pressed you to accept of your nephew's proposal to return to the old Lodge, where a hundred men might be concealed, though a thousand were making search to discover them. Never such a place for hide-and-seek, as I shall make good when I can find means to publish my Wonders of Woodstock."

"But, my son—my dear son," said the knight, "shall I not then instantly see him! and wherefore did you not forewarn me of this joyful event?"

"Because I was uncertain of his motions," said the doctor, "and rather thought he was bound for the sea-side, and that it would be best to tell you of his fate when he was safe on board, and in full sail for France. We had appointed to let you know all when I came hither to-night to join you. But there is a red-coat in the house whom we care not to trust farther than we could not help. We dared not, therefore, venture in by the hall; and so, prowling round the building, Albert informed us, that an old prank of his when a boy consisted of entering by this window. A lad who was with us would needs make the experiment, as there seemed to be no light in the chamber, and the moonlight without made us liable to be detected. His foot slipped, and our friend Bevis came upon us."

"In good truth, you acted simply," said Sir Henry, "to attack a garrison without a summons. But all this is nothing to my son Albert—where is he?—Let me see him."

"But, Sir Henry, wait," said the doctor, "till your restored strength——"

"A plague of my restored strength, man!" answered the knight, as his old spirit began to awaken within him.—"Dost not remember, that I lay on Edgehill-field all night, bleeding like a bullock from five several wounds, and wore my armour within six weeks? and

you talk to me of the few drops of blood that follow such a scratch as a cat's claw might have made!"

"Nay, if you feel so courageous," said the doctor, "I will fetch your son—he is not far distant."

So saying, he left the apartment, making a sign to Alice to remain, in case any symptoms of her father's weakness should return.

It was fortunate, perhaps, that Sir Henry never seemed to recollect the precise nature of the alarm, which had at once, and effectually as the shock of the thunderbolt, for the moment suspended his faculties. Something he said more than once of being certain he had done mischief with that *stramaçon*, as he called it; but his mind did not recur to that danger, as having been incurred by his son. Alice, glad to see that her father appeared to have forgotten a circumstance so fearful (as men often forget the blow, or other sudden cause, which has thrown them into a swoon), readily excused herself from throwing much light on the matter, by pleading the general confusion. And in a few minutes, Albert cut off all farther inquiry, by entering the room, followed by the doctor, and throwing himself alternately into the arms of his father and of his sister.

CHAPTER THE TWENTIETH.

> The boy is—hark ye, sirrah—what's your name?—
> Oh, Jacob—ay, I recollect—the same.
>
> CRABBE.

THE affectionate relatives were united as those who, meeting under great adversity, feel still the happiness of sharing it in common. They embraced again and again, and gave way to those expansions of the heart, which at once express and relieve the pressure of mental

agitation. At length the tide of emotion began to subside; and Sir Henry, still holding his recovered son by the hand, resumed the command of his feelings which he usually practised.

"So you have seen the last of our battles, Albert," he said, "and the King's colours have fallen for ever before the rebels?"

"It is but even so," said the young man—"the last cast of the die was thrown, and, alas! lost, at Worcester; and Cromwell's fortune carried it there, as it has wherever he has shewn himself."

"Well—it can but be for a time—it can but be for a time," answered his father; "the devil is potent, they say, in raising and gratifying favourites, but he can grant but short leases.—And the King—the King, Albert—the King—in my ear—close, close!"

"Our last news were confident that he had escaped from Bristol."

"Thank God for that—thank God for that!" said the knight. "Where didst thou leave him?"

"Our men were almost all cut to pieces at the bridge," Albert replied; "but I followed his Majesty, with about five hundred other officers and gentlemen, who were resolved to die around him, until, as our numbers and appearance drew the whole pursuit after us, it pleased his Majesty to dismiss us, with many thanks and words of comfort to us in general, and some kind expressions to most of us in especial. He sent his royal greeting to you, sir, in particular, and said more than becomes me to repeat."

"Nay, I will hear it every word, boy," said Sir Henry; "is not the certainty that thou hast discharged thy duty, and that King Charles owns it, enough to console me for all we have lost and suffered, and wouldst thou stint me of it from a false shamefacedness?—I will have it out of thee, were it drawn from thee with cords!"

"It shall need no such compulsion," said the young man—"It was his Majesty's pleasure to bid me tell Sir Henry Lee, in his name, that if his son could not go before his father in the race of loyalty, he was at least following him closely, and would soon move side by side."

"Said he so?" answered the knight—"Old Victor Lee will look down with pride on thee, Albert!—But I forget—you must be weary and hungry."

"Even so, sir," said Albert; "but these are things which of late I have been in the habit of enduring for safety's sake."

"Joceline!—what ho, Joceline!"

The underkeeper entered, and received orders to get supper prepared directly.

"My son and Dr. Rochecliffe are half starving," said the knight.

"And there is a lad, too, below," said Joceline; "a page, he says, of Colonel Albert's, whose belly rings cupboard too, and that to no common tune; for I think he could eat a horse, as the Yorkshireman says, behind the saddle. He had better eat at the sideboard; for he has devoured a whole loaf of bread and butter, as fast as Phœbe could cut it, and it has not staid his

stomach for a minute—and truly I think you had better keep him under your own eyes, for the steward beneath might ask him troublesome questions if he went below—And then he is impatient, as all your gentlemen pages are, and is saucy among the women."

"Whom is it he talks of?—what page hast thou got, Albert, that bears himself so ill?" said Sir Henry.

"The son of a dear friend, a noble lord of Scotland, who followed the great Montrose's banner—afterwards joined the King in Scotland, and came with him as far as Worcester. He was wounded the day before the battle, and conjured me to take this youth under my charge, which I did, something unwillingly; but I could not refuse a father, perhaps on his death-bed, pleading for the safety of an only son."

"Thou hadst deserved an halter, hadst thou hesitated," said Sir Henry; "the smallest tree can always give some shelter,—and it pleases me to think the old stock of Lee is not so totally prostrate, but it may yet be a refuge for the distressed. Fetch the youth in;—he is of noble blood, and these are no times of ceremony—he shall sit with us at the same table, page though he be; and if you have not schooled him handsomely in his manners, he may not be the worse of some lessons from me."

"You will excuse his national drawling accent, sir?" said Albert, "though I know you like it not."

"I have small cause, Albert," answered the knight —"small cause.—Who stirred up these disunions?—the Scots. Who strengthened the hands of Parliament,

when their cause was well-nigh ruined?—the Scots again. Who delivered up the King, their countryman, who had flung himself upon their protection?—the Scots again. But this lad's father, you say, has fought on the part of the noble Montrose; and such a man as the great Marquis may make amends for the degeneracy of a whole nation."

"Nay, father," said Albert, "and I must add, that though this lad is uncouth and wayward, and, as you will see, something wilful, yet the King has not a more zealous friend in England; and, when occasion offered, he fought stoutly, too, in his defence—I marvel he comes not."

"He hath taken the bath," said Joceline, "and nothing less would serve than that he should have it immediately—the supper, he said, might be got ready in the meantime; and he commands all about him as if he were in his father's old castle, where he might have called long enough, I warrant, without any one to hear him."

"Indeed?" said Sir Henry, "this must be a forward chick of the game, to crow so early.—What is his name?"

"His name?—it escapes me every hour, it is so hard a one," said Albert—"Kerneguy is his name—Louis Kerneguy; his father was Lord Killstewers, of Kincardineshire."

"Kerneguy, and Killstewers, and Kin—what d'ye call it?—Truly," said the knight, "these northern men's names and titles smack of their origin—they sound like

a north-west wind, rumbling and roaring among heather and rocks."

"It is but the ausperities of the Celtic and Saxon dialects," said Dr. Rochecliffe, "which, according to Verstegan, still linger in those northern parts of the island.—But peace—here comes supper, and Master Louis Kerneguy."

Supper entered accordingly, borne in by Joceline and Phœbe, and after it, leaning on a huge knotty stick, and having his nose in the air like a questing hound—for his attention was apparently more fixed on the good provisions that went before him than anything else—came Master Kerneguy, and seated himself, without much ceremony, at the lower end of the table.

He was a tall, rawboned lad, with a shock head of hair, fiery red, like many of his country, while the harshness of his national features was increased by the contrast of his complexion, turned almost black by the exposure to all sorts of weather, which, in that skulking and rambling mode of life, the fugitive royalists had been obliged to encounter. His address was by no means prepossessing, being a mixture of awkwardness and forwardness, and shewing, in a remarkable degree, how a want of easy address may be consistent with an admirable stock of assurance. His face intimated having received some recent scratches, and the care of Dr. Rochecliffe had decorated it with a number of patches, which even enhanced its natural plainness. Yet the eyes were brilliant and expressive, and, amid his ugliness—for it amounted to that degree of irregu-

larity—the face was not deficient in some lines which expressed both sagacity and resolution.

The dress of Albert himself was far beneath his quality, as the son of Sir Henry Lee and commander of a regiment in the royal service; but that of his page was still more dilapidated. A disastrous green jerkin, which had been changed to a hundred hues by sun and rain, so that the original could scarce be discovered, huge clouterly shoes, leathern breeches—such as were worn by hedgers—coarse gray worsted stockings, were the attire of the honourable youth, whose limping gait, while it added to the ungainliness of his manner, shewed, at the same time, the extent of his sufferings. His appearance bordered so much upon what is vulgarly called the queer, that even with Alice it would have excited some sense of ridicule, had not compassion been predominant.

The grace was said; and the young squire of Ditchley, as well as Dr. Rochecliffe, made an excellent figure at a meal, the like of which, in quality and abundance, did not seem to have lately fallen to their share. But their feats were child's play to those of the Scottish youth. Far from betraying any symptoms of the bread and butter with which he had attempted to close the orifice of his stomach, his appetite appeared to have been sharpened by a nine-days' fast; and the knight was disposed to think that the very genius of famine himself, come forth from his native regions of the north, was in the act of honouring him with a visit, while, as if afraid of losing a moment's exertion, Master Kerneguy

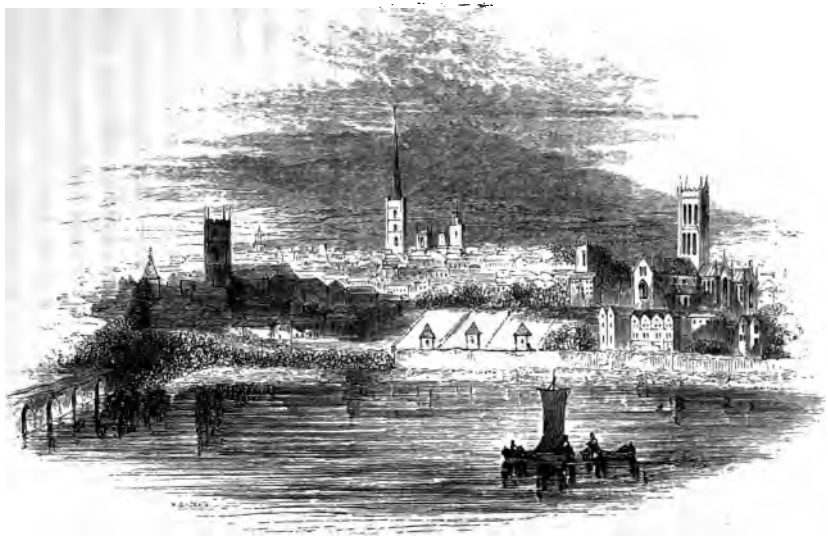
never looked either to right or left, or spoke a single word to any at table.

"I am glad to see that you have brought a good appetite for our country fare, young gentleman," said Sir Henry.

"Bread of gude! sir," said the page, "an ye'll find flesh, I'se find appetite conforming ony day o' the year. But the truth is, sir, that the appeteezement has been coming on for three days or four, and the meat in this southland of yours has been scarce, and hard to come by; so, sir, I'm making up for lost time, as the piper of Sligo said, when he eat a hail side o' mutton."

"You have been country-bred, young man," said the knight, who, like others of his time, held the reins of discipline rather tight over the rising generation; "at least, to judge from the youths of Scotland whom I have seen at his late Majesty's court, in former days; —they had less appetite, and more—more"—As he sought the qualifying phrase, which might supply the place of "good manners," his guest closed the sentence in his own way—"And more meat, it may be—the better luck theirs."

Sir Henry stared and was silent. His son seemed to think it time to interpose—"My dear father," he said, "think how many years have run since the Thirty-eight, when the Scottish troubles first began, and I am sure that you will not wonder that, while the Barons of Scotland have been, for one cause or other, perpetually in the field, the education of their children at home must have been much neglected, and that young men



of my friend's age know better how to use a broad-sword, or to toss a pike, than the decent ceremonials of society."

"The reason is a sufficient one," said the knight, "and since thou sayest thy follower Kernigo can fight, we'll not let him lack victuals, a God's name.—See, he looks angrily still at yonder cold loin of mutton—for God's sake put it all on his plate!"

"I can bide the bit and the buffet," said the honourable Master Kerneguy—"a hungry tike ne'er minds a blaud with a rough bane."

"Now, God ha'e mercy, Albert, but if this be the son of a Scots peer," said Sir Henry to his son, in a low tone of voice, "I would not be the English ploughman who would change manners with him for his ancient blood, and his nobility, and his estate to boot, an he has one.—He has eaten, as I am a Christian, near four pounds of solid butcher's meat, and with the grace of a wolf tugging at the carcass of a dead horse.—Oh he is about to drink at last—Soh!—he wipes his mouth, though,—and dips his fingers in the ewer—and dries them, I profess, with the napkin!—there is some grace in him after all."

"Here is wussing all your vera gude healths!" said the youth of quality, and took a draught in proportion to the solids which he had sent before; he then flung his knife and fork awkwardly on the trencher, which he pushed back towards the centre of the table, extended his feet beneath it till they rested on their heels, folded his arms on his well-replenished stomach, and lolling

back in his chair, looked much as if he was about to whistle himself asleep.

"Soh!" said the knight—"the honourable Master Kernigo hath laid down his arms.—Withdraw these things, and give us our glasses—Fill them around, Joceline; and if the devil or the whole Parliament were within hearing, let them hear Henry Lee of Ditchley drink a health to King Charles and confusion to his enemies!"

"Amen!" said a voice from behind the door.

All the company looked at each other in astonishment, at a response so little expected. It was followed by a solemn and peculiar tap, such as a kind of freemasonry had introduced among royalists, and by which they were accustomed to make themselves and their principles known to each other, when they met by accident.

"There is no danger," said Albert, knowing the sign —"it is a friend;—yet I wish he had been at a greater distance just now."

"And why, my son, should you wish the absence of one true man, who may, perhaps, wish to share our abundance, on one of those rare occasions when we have superfluity at our disposal?—Go, Joceline, see who knocks—and, if a safe man, admit him."

"And if otherwise," said Joceline, "methinks I shall be able to prevent his troubling the good company!"

"No violence, Joceline, on your life," said Albert Lee; and Alice echoed, "For God's sake no violence!"

"No unnecessary violence at least," said the good knight; "for if the time demands it, I will have it seen that I am master of my own house." Joceline Joliffe nodded assent to all parties, and went on tiptoe to exchange one or two other mysterious symbols and knocks, ere he opened the door. It may be here remarked, that this species of secret association, with its signals of union, existed among the more dissolute and desperate class of cavaliers, men habituated to the dissipated life which they had been accustomed to in an ill-disciplined army, where every thing like order and regularity was too apt to be accounted a badge of puritanism. These were the "roaring boys" who met in hedge alehouses, and when they had by any chance obtained a little money, or a little credit, determined to create a counter-revolution by declaring their sittings permanent, and proclaimed, in the words of one of their choicest ditties,—

We'll drink till we bring
In triumph back the king.

The leaders and gentry, of a higher description and more regular morals, did not indeed partake such excesses, but they still kept their eye upon a class of persons, who, from courage and desperation, were capable of serving on an advantageous occasion the fallen cause of royalty; and recorded the lodges and blind taverns at which they met, as wholesale merchants know the houses of call of the mechanics whom they may have occasion to employ, and can tell where they may find them when need requires. It is scarce necessary to add,

that among the lower class, and sometimes even among the higher, there were men found capable of betraying the projects and conspiracies of their associates, whether well or indifferently combined, to the governors of the state. Cromwell, in particular, had gained some correspondents of this kind of the highest rank, and of the most undoubted character, among the royalists, who, if they made scruple of impeaching or betraying individuals who confided in them, had no hesitation in giving the government such general information as served to enable him to disappoint the purposes of any plot or conspiracy.

To return to our story. In much shorter time than we have spent in reminding the reader of these historical particulars, Joliffe had made his mystic communication; and being duly answered as by one of the initiated, he undid the door, and there entered our old friend Roger Wildrake, roundhead in dress, as his safety and his dependence on Colonel Everard compelled him to be, but that dress worn in a most cavalier-like manner, and forming a stronger contrast than usual with the demeanour and language of the wearer, to which it was never very congenial.

His puritanic hat, the emblem of that of Ralpho in the prints to Hudibras, or, as he called it, his felt umbrella, was set most knowingly on one side of the head, as if it had been a Spanish hat and feather; his straight square-caped sad-coloured cloak was flung gaily upon one shoulder, as if it had been of three-piled taffeta, lined with crimson silk; and he paraded his

huge calf-skin boots, as if they had been silken hose and Spanish leather shoes, with roses on the instep. In short, the airs which he gave himself, of a most thorough-paced wild gallant and cavalier, joined to a glistening of self-satisfaction in his eye, and an inimitable swagger in his gait, which completely announced his thoughtless, conceited, and reckless character, formed a most ridiculous contrast to his gravity of attire.

It could not, on the other hand, be denied, that in spite of the touch of ridicule which attached to his character, and the loose morality which he had learned in the dissipation of town pleasures, and afterwards in the disorderly life of a soldier, Wildrake had points about him both to make him feared and respected. He was handsome, even in spite of his air of debauched effrontery; a man of the most decided courage, though his vaunting rendered it sometimes doubtful; and entertained a sincere sense of his political principles, such as they were, though he was often so imprudent in asserting and boasting of them as, joined with his dependence on Colonel Everard, induced prudent men to doubt his sincerity.

Such as he was, however, he entered the parlour of Victor Lee, where his presence was anything but desirable to the parties present, with a jaunty step, and a consciousness of deserving the best possible reception. This assurance was greatly aided by circumstances which rendered it obvious, that if the jocund cavalier had limited himself to one draught of liquor that

evening, in terms of his vow of temperance, it must have been a very deep and long one.

"Save ye, gentlemen, save ye.—Save you, good Sir Henry Lee, though I have scarce the honour to be known to you.—Save you, worthy doctor, and a speedy resurrection to the fallen Church of England."

"You are welcome, sir," said Sir Henry Lee, whose feelings of hospitality, and of the fraternal reception due to a royalist sufferer, induced him to tolerate this intrusion more than he might have done otherwise. "If you have fought or suffered for the King, sir, it is an excuse for joining us, and commanding our services in anything in our power—although at present we are a family-party.—But I think I saw you in waiting upon Master Markham Everard, who calls himself Colonel Everard.—If your message is from him, you may wish to see me in private?"

"Not at all, Sir Henry, not at all.—It is true, as my ill hap will have it, that being on the stormy side of the hedge—like all honest men—you understand me, Sir Henry,—I am glad, as it were, to gain something from my old friend and comrade's countenance—not by truckling or disowning my principles, sir—I defy such practices;—but, in short, by doing him any kindness in my power when he is pleased to call on me. So I came down here with a message from him to the old roundheaded son of a —— (I beg the young lady's pardon, from the crown of her head down to the very toes of her slipper)—And so, sir, chancing as I was stumbling out in the dark, I heard you give a

toast, sir, which warmed my heart, sir, and ever will, sir, till death chills it;—and so I made bold to let you know there was an honest man within hearing."

Such was the self-introduction of Master Wildrake, to which the knight replied, by asking him to sit down, and take a glass of sack to his Majesty's glorious restoration. Wildrake, at this hint, squeezed in without ceremony beside the young Scotsman, and not only pledged his landlord's toast, but seconded its import, by volunteering a verse or two of his favourite loyal ditty,—"The King shall enjoy his own again." The heartiness which he threw into his song opened still farther the heart of the old knight, though Albert and Alice looked at each other with looks resentful of the intrusion, and desirous to put an end to it. The honourable Master Kerneguy either possessed that happy indifference of temper which does not deign to notice such circumstances, or he was able to assume the appearance of it to perfection, as he sat sipping sack, and cracking walnuts, without testifying the least sense that an addition had been made to the party. Wildrake, who liked the liquor and the company, shewed no unwillingness to repay his landlord, by being at the expense of the conversation.

"You talk of fighting and suffering, Sir Henry Lee —Lord help us, we have all had our share. All the world knows what Sir Henry Lee has done from Edgefield downwards, wherever a loyal sword was drawn, or a loyal flag fluttered. Ah, God help us! I have done something too.—My name is Roger Wil-

drake of Squattlesea-mere, Lincoln—not that you are ever like to have heard it before, but I was captain in Lunsford's light-horse, and afterwards with Goring. I was a child-eater, sir—a babe-bolter."

"I have heard of your regiment's exploits, sir; and perhaps you may find I have seen some of them, if we should spend ten minutes together—And I think I have heard of your name too.—I beg to drink your health, Captain Wildrake of Squattlesea-mere, Lincolnshire."

"Sir Henry, I drink yours in this pint bumper, and upon my knee; and I would do as much for that young gentleman"—(looking at Albert)—"and the squire of the green cassock too, holding it for green, as the colours are not to my eyes altogether clear and distinguishable."

It was a remarkable part of what is called by theatrical folk the by-play of this scene, that Albert was conversing apart with Doctor Rochecliffe in whispers, even more than the divine seemed desirous of encouraging; yet to whatever their private conversation referred, it did not deprive the young Colonel of the power of listening to what was going forward in the party at large, and interfering from time to time, like a watch-dog, who can distinguish the slightest alarm, even when employed in the engrossing process of taking his food.

"Captain Wildrake," said Albert, "we have no objection—I mean my friend and I—to be communicative on proper occasions; but you, sir, who are so old a sufferer, must needs know, that at such casual meet-

ings as this, men do not mention their names unless they are specially wanted. It is a point of conscience, sir, to be able to say, if your principal, Captain Everard or Colonel Everard, if he be a Colonel, should examine you upon oath, I did not know who the persons were whom I heard drink such and such toasts."

"Faith, I have a better way of it, worthy sir," answered Wildrake; "I never can, for the life of me, remember that there were any such and such toasts drunk at all. It's a strange gift of forgetfulness I have."

"Well, sir," replied the younger Lee; "but we, who have unhappily more tenacious memories, would willingly abide by the more general rule."

"Oh, sir," answered Wildrake, "with all my heart. I intrude on no man's confidence, d—n me—and I only spoke for civility's sake, having the purpose of drinking your health in a good fashion.—(Then he broke forth into melody)—

"Then let the health go round, a-round, a-round, a-round,
Then let the health go round;
For though your stocking be of silk,
Your knee shall kiss the ground, a-ground, a-ground, a-ground,
Your knee shall kiss the ground."

"Urge it no farther," said Sir Henry, addressing his son; "Master Wildrake is one of the old school—one of the tantivy boys; and we must bear a little, for if they drink hard they fought well. I will never forget how a party came up and rescued us clerks of Oxford, as they called the regiment I belonged to, out

of a cursed embroglio during the attack on Brentford. I tell you we were enclosed with the cockneys' pikes both front and rear, and we should have come off but ill, had not Lunsford's light horse, the babe-eaters as they called them, charged up to the pike's point and brought us off."

"I am glad you thought on that, Sir Henry," said Wildrake; "and do you remember what the officer of Lunsford's said?"

"I think I do," said Sir Henry smiling.

"Well, then, did not he call out, when the women were coming down, howling like sirens as they were—'Have none of you a plump child that you could give us, to break our fast upon?'"

"Truth itself!" said the knight; "and a great fat woman stepped forward with a baby, and offered it to the supposed cannibal."

All at the table, Master Kerneguy excepted, who seemed to think that good food of any kind required no apology, held up their hands in token of amazement.

"Ay," said Wildrake, "the——a-hem!—I crave the lady's pardon again, from tip of top-knot to hem of farthingale—but the cursed creature proved to be a parish nurse, who had been paid for the child half a year in advance. Gad, I took the baby out of the bitch-wolf's hand; and I have contrived, though God knows I have lived in a skeldering sort of way myself, to breed up bold Breakfast, as I call him, ever since.—It was paying dear for a jest, though."

"Sir, I honour you for your humanity," said the

old knight—"Sir I thank you for your courage—Sir, I am glad to see you here," said the good knight, his eyes watering almost to overflowing. "So you were the wild officer who cut us out of the toils; Oh, sir, had you but stopped when I called on you, and allowed us to clear the streets of Brentford with our musketeers, we would have been at London stone that day! But your good will was the same."

"Ay, truly was it," said Wildrake, who now sat triumphant and glorious in his easy chair; "and here is to all the brave hearts, sir, that fought and fell in that same storm of Brentford. We drove all before us like chaff, till the shops, where they sold strong waters and other temptations, brought us up. Gad, sir, we, the babe-eaters, had too many acquaintances in Brentford, and our stout Prince Rupert was ever better at making way than drawing off. Gad, sir, for my own poor share, I did but go into the house of a poor widow lady, who maintained a charge of daughters, and whom I had known of old, to get my horse fed, a morsel of meat, and so forth, when these cockney pikes of the artillery ground, as you very well call them, rallied, and came in with their armed heads, as boldly as so many Cotswold rams. I sprang down stairs, got to my horse—but, egad, I fancy all my troop had widows and orphan maidens to comfort as well as I, for only five of us got together. We cut our way through successfully—and Gad, gentlemen, I carried my little Breakfast on the pommel before me; and there was such a hollowing and screeching, as if the whole town thought I was to

kill, roast, and eat the poor child, so soon as I got to quarters. But devil a cockney charged up to my bonny bay, poor lass, to rescue little cake-bread; they only cried haro, and out upon me."

"Alas, alas!" said the knight, "we made ourselves seem worse than we were; and we were too bad to deserve God's blessing even in a good cause. But it is needless to look back—we did not deserve victories when God gave them, for we never improved them like good soldiers, or like Christian men; and so we gave these canting scoundrels the advantage of us, for they assumed, out of mere hypocrisy, the discipline and orderly behaviour which we who drew our swords in a better cause, ought to have practised out of true principle. But here is my hand, Captain. I have often wished to see the honest fellow who charged up so smartly in our behalf, and I reverence you for the care you took of the poor child. I am glad this dilapidated place has still some hospitality to offer you, although we cannot treat you to roasted babes or stewed sucklings—eh, Captain?"

"Troth, Sir Henry, the scandal was sore against us on that score. I remember Lacy, who was an old play-actor, and a lieutenant in ours, made drollery on it in a play which was sometimes acted at Oxford, when our hearts were something up, called I think the Old Troop."*

So saying, and feeling more familiar as his merits were known, he hitched his chair up against that of

* Note A. Cannibalism imputed to the Cavaliers.

the Scottish lad, who was seated next him, and who in shifting his place, was awkward enough to disturb, in his turn, Alice Lee, who sate opposite, and, a little offended, or at least embarrassed, drew her chair away from the table.

"I crave pardon," said the honourable Master Kerneguy; "but, sir," to Master Wildrake, "ye hae e'en garr'd me hurt the young lady's shank."

"I crave your pardon, sir, and much more that of the fair lady, as is reasonable; though, rat me, sir, if it was I set your chair a-trundling in that way. Zooks, sir, I have brought with me no plague, nor pestilence, nor other infectious disorder, that ye should have started away as if I had been a leper, and discomposed the lady, which I would have prevented with my life, sir. Sir, if ye be northern born, as your tongue bespeaks, egad, it was I ran the risk in drawing near you; so there was small reason for you to bolt."

"Master Wildrake," said Albert, interfering, "this young gentleman is a stranger as well as you, under protection of Sir Henry's hospitality, and it cannot be agreeable for my father to see disputes arise among his guests. You may mistake the young gentleman's quality from his present appearance—this is the Honourable Master Louis Kerneguy, sir, son of my Lord Kilstewers of Kincardineshire, one who has fought for the King, young as he is."

"No dispute shall rise through me, sir—none through me," said Wildrake; "your exposition sufficeth, sir.—Master Louis Girnigo, son of my Lord Kilsteer, in

Gringardenshire, I am your humble slave, sir, and drink your health, in token that I honour you, and all true Scots who draw their Andrew Ferraras on the right side, sir."

"I'se beholden to you, and thank you, sir," said the young man, with some haughtiness of manner, which hardly corresponded with his rusticity; "and I wuss your health in a ceevil way."

Most judicious persons would have here dropped the conversation; but it was one of Wildrake's marked peculiarities, that he could never let matters stand when they were well. He continued to plague the shy, proud, and awkward lad with his observations. "You speak your national dialect pretty strongly, Master Girnigo," said he, "but I think not quite the language of the gallants that I have known among the Scottish cavaliers —I knew, for example, some of the Gordons, and others of good repute, who always put an *f* for the *wh*, as *faat* for *what*, *fan* for *when*, and the like."

Albert Lee here interposed, and said that the provinces of Scotland, like those of England, had their different modes of pronunciation.

"You are very right, sir," said Wildrake. "I reckon myself, now, a pretty good speaker of their cursed jargon—no offence, young gentleman; and yet, when I took a turn with some of Montrose's folk in the South Hielands, as they call their beastly wildernesses (no offence again), I chanced to be by myself, and to lose my way, when I said to a shepherd-fellow, making my mouth as wide, and my voice as broad as I could, *whore am I*

ganging till?—confound me if the fellow could answer me, unless, indeed, he was sulky, as the bumpkins will be now and then to the gentlemen of the sword."

This was familiarly spoken, and though partly addressed to Albert, was still more directed to his immediate neighbour, the young Scotsman, who seemed, from bashfulness, or some other reason, rather shy of his intimacy. To one or two personal touches from Wildrake's elbow, administered during his last speech, by way of a practical appeal to him in particular, he only answered, "Misunderstandings were to be expected when men converse in national deealects."

Wildrake, now considerably drunker than he ought to have been in civil company, caught up the phrase, and repeated it;—"Misunderstanding, sir—Misunderstanding, sir?—I do not know how I am to construe that, sir; but to judge from the information of these scratches on your honourable visnomy, I should augur that you had been of late at misunderstanding with the cat, sir."

"You are mistaken, then, friend, for it was with the dowg," answered the Scotsman, dryly, and cast a look towards Albert.

"We had some trouble with the watch-dogs in entering so late in the evening," said Albert, in explanation, "and this youth had a fall among some rubbish, by which he came by these scratches."—

"And now, dear Sir Henry," said Dr. Rochecliffe, "allow us to remind you of your gout, and our long journey. I do it the rather that my good friend your

son has been, during the whole time of supper, putting questions to me aside, which had much better be reserved till to-morrow—May we therefore ask permission to retire to our night's rest?"

"These private committees in a merry meeting," said Wildrake, "are a solecism in breeding. They always put me in mind of the cursed committees at Westminster.—But shall we to roost before we rouse the night-owl with a catch?"

"Aha, canst thou quote Shakspeare?" said Sir Henry, pleased at discovering a new good quality in his acquaintance, whose military services were otherwise but just able to counterbalance the intrusive freedom of his conversation. "In the name of merry Will," he continued,—"whom I never saw, though I have seen many of his comrades, as Alleyn, Hemmings, and so on,—we will have a single catch, and one rouse about, and then to bed."

After the usual discussion about the choice of the song, and the parts which each was to bear, they united their voices in trolling a loyal glee, which was popular among the party at the time, and in fact believed to be composed by no less a person than Doctor Rochecliffe himself.

GLEE FOR KING CHARLES.

Bring the bowl which you boast,
Fill it up to the brim;
'Tis to him we love most,
And to all who love him.

Brave gallants, stand up,
And avaunt, ye base carles!
Were there death in the cup,
Here's a health to King Charles!

Though he wanders through dangers,
Unaided, unknown,
Dependent on strangers,
Estranged from his own;
Though 'tis under our breath
Amidst forfeits and perils,
Here's to honour and faith,
And a health to King Charles!

Let such honours abound
As the time can afford,
The knee on the ground,
And the hand on the sword;
But the time shall come round,
When, mid Lords, Dukes, and Earls,
The loud trumpets shall sound
Here's a health to King Charles!

After this display of loyalty, and a final libation, the party took leave of each other for the night. Sir Henry offered his old acquaintance Wildrake a bed for the evening, who weighed the matter somewhat in this fashion: "Why, to speak truth, my patron will expect me at the borough — but then he is used to my staying out of doors a-nights. Then there's the Devil, that they say haunts Woodstock; but with the blessing of this reverend doctor, I defy him and all his works — I saw him not when I slept here twice before, and I am sure if he was absent then, he has not come back with Sir Henry Lee and his family. So I accept your courtesy, Sir Henry, and I thank you, as a cavalier of

Lunsford should thank one of the fighting clerks of Oxon. God bless the King! I care not who hears it, and confusion to Noll and his red nose!" Off he went accordingly with a bottle-swagger, guided by Joceline, to whom Albert, in the meantime, had whispered, to be sure to quarter him far enough from the rest of the family.

Young Lee then saluted his sister, and, with the formality of those times, asked and received his father's blessing with an affectionate embrace. His page seemed desirous to imitate one part of his example, but was repelled by Alice, who only replied to his offered salute with a courtesy. He next bowed his head in an awkward fashion to her father, who wished him a good night. "I am glad to see, young man," he said, "that you have at least learned the reverence due to age. It should always be paid, sir; because in doing so you render that honour to others which you will expect yourself to receive when you approach the close of your life. More will I speak with you at leisure, on your duties as a page, which office in former days used to be the very school of chivalry; whereas of late, by the disorderly times, it has become little better than a school of wild and disordered license; which made rare Ben Jonson exclaim——"

"Nay, father," said Albert, interposing, "you must consider this day's fatigue, and the poor lad is almost asleep on his legs—to-morrow he will listen with more profit to your kind admonitions.—And you, Louis, remember at least one part of your duty—take the

candles and light us—here Joceline comes to shew us the way. Once more, good night, good Doctor Rochecliffe—good night, all."

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIRST.

Groom. Hail, noble prince!
King Richard. Thanks, noble peer!
The cheapest of us is a groat too dear.

RICHARD II.

ALBERT and his page were ushered by Joceline to what was called the Spanish Chamber, a huge old scrambling bedroom, rather in a dilapidated condition, but furnished with a large standing-bed for the master, and a truckle-bed for the domestic, as was common at a much later period in old English houses, where the gentleman often required the assistance of a groom of the chambers to help him to bed, if the hospitality had been exuberant. The walls were covered with hang-

ings of cordovan leather, stamped with gold, and representing fights between the Spaniards and Moriscoes, bull-feasts, and other sports peculiar to the Peninsula, from which it took its name of the Spanish chamber. These hangings were in some places entirely torn down, in others defaced and hanging in tatters. But Albert stopped not to make observations, anxious, it seemed, to get Joceline out of the room; which he achieved by hastily answering his offers of fresh fuel, and more liquor, in the negative, and returning, with equal conciseness, the under-keeper's good wishes for the evening. He at length retired, somewhat unwillingly, and as if he thought that his young master might have bestowed a few more words upon a faithful old retainer after so long absence.

Joliffe was no sooner gone, than, before a single word was spoken between Albert Lee and his page, the former hastened to the door, examined lock, latch, and bolt, and made them fast, with the most scrupulous attention. He superadded to these precautions that of a long screw bolt, which he brought out of his pocket, and which he screwed on to the staple in such a manner as to render it impossible to withdraw it, or open the door unless by breaking it down. The page held a light to him during the operation, which his master went through with much exactness and dexterity. But when Albert arose from his knee, on which he had rested during the accomplishment of this task, the manner of the companions was on the sudden entirely changed towards each other. The honourable

Master Kerneguy, from a cubbish lout of a raw Scotsman, seemed to have acquired at once all the grace and ease of motion and manner, which could be given by an acquaintance of the earliest and most familiar kind with the best company of the time.

He gave the light he held to Albert, with the easy indifference of a superior, who rather graces than troubles his dependent by giving him some slight service to perform. Albert, with the greatest appearance of deference, assumed in his turn the character of torch-bearer, and lighted his page across the chamber, without turning his back upon him as he did so. He then set the light on the table by the bedside, and approaching the young man with deep reverence, received from him the soiled green jacket, with the same profound respect as if he had been a first lord of the bedchamber, or other officer of the household of the highest distinction, disrobing his Sovereign of the Mantle of the Garter. The person to whom this ceremony was addressed endured it for a minute or two with profound gravity, and then bursting out a-laughing, exclaimed to Albert, "What a devil means all this formality?—thou complimentest with these miserable rags as if they were silks and sables, and with poor Louis Kerneguy as if he were the King of Great Britain?"

"And if your Majesty's commands, and the circumstances of the time, have made me for a moment seem to forget that you are my sovereign, surely I may be permitted to render my homage as such while you are in your own royal palace of Woodstock?"

"Truly," replied the disguised Monarch, "the sovereign and the palace are not ill matched;—these tattered hangings and my ragged jerkin suit each other admirably.—*This* Woodstock!—*this* the bower where the royal Norman revelled with the fair Rosamond Clifford!—Why it is a place of assignation for owls!" Then, suddenly recollecting himself, with his natural courtesy, he added, as if fearing he might have hurt Albert's feelings—"But the more obscure and retired, it is the fitter for our purpose, Lee; and if it does seem to be a roost for owls, as there is no denying, why we know it has nevertheless brought up eagles."

He threw himself as he spoke upon a chair, and indolently, but gracefully, received the kind offices of Albert, who undid the coarse buttonings of the leathern gamashes which defended his legs, and spoke to him the whilst:—"What a fine specimen of the olden time is your father, Sir Henry! It is strange I should not have seen him before;—but I heard my father often speak of him as being among the flower of our real old English gentry. By the mode in which he began to school me, I can guess you had a tight taskmaster of him, Albert—I warrant you never wore hat in his presence, eh?"

"I never cocked it at least in his presence, please your Majesty, as I have seen some youngsters do," answered Albert; "Indeed if I had, it must have been a stout beaver to have saved me from a broken head."

"Oh, I doubt it not," replied the king; "a fine old

gentleman—but with that, methinks in his countenance, that assures you he would not hate the child in sparing the rod.—Hark ye, Albert—Suppose the same glorious Restoration come round,—which, if drinking to its arrival can hasten it, should not be far distant,—for in that particular our adherents never neglect their duty,—suppose it come, therefore, and that thy father, as must be of course, becomes an Earl and one of the Privy Council, odds-fish, man, I shall be as much afraid of him as ever was my grandfather Henri Quatre of old Sully.—Imagine there were such a trinket now about the Court as the fair Rosamond, or La Belle Gabrielle, what a work there would be of pages, and grooms of the chamber, to get the pretty rogue clandestinely shuffled out by the backstairs, like a prohibited commodity, when the step of the Earl of Woodstock was heard in the antechamber!"

"I am glad to see your Majesty so merry after your fatiguing journey."

"The fatigue was nothing, man," said Charles; "a kind welcome and a good meal made amends for all that. But they must have suspected thee of bringing a wolf from the braes of Badenoch along with you, instead of a two-legged being, with no more than the usual allowance of mortal stowage for provisions. I was really ashamed of my appetite; but thou knowest I had eat nothing for twenty-four hours, save the raw egg you stole for me from the old woman's hen-roost—I tell thee I blushed to shew myself so ravenous before that high-bred and respectable old gentleman your

father, and the very pretty girl your sister—or cousin, is she?"

"She is my sister," said Albert Lee, dryly, and added, in the same breath, "Your Majesty's appetite suited well enough with the character of a raw northern lad.—Would your Majesty now please to retire to rest?"

"Not for a minute or two," said the King, retaining his seat. "Why, man, I have scarce had my tongue unchained to-day; and to talk with that northern twang, and besides, the fatigue of being obliged to speak every word in character,—Gad, it's like walking as the galley slaves do on the Continent, with a twenty four pound shot chained to their legs—they may drag it along, but they cannot move with comfort. And, by the way, thou art slack in paying me my well-deserved tribute of compliments on my counterfeiting. —Did I not play Louis Kerneguy as round as a ring?"

"If your Majesty asks my serious opinion, perhaps I may be forgiven if I say your dialect was somewhat too coarse for a Scottish youth of high birth, and your behaviour perhaps a little too churlish. I thought too —though I pretend not to be skilful—that some of your Scottish sounded as if it were not genuine."

"Not genuine?—there is no pleasing thee, Albert. —Why, who should speak genuine Scottish but myself?—Was I not their King for a matter of ten months? and if I did not get knowledge of their language, I wonder what else I got by it. Did not east

country, and south country, and west country, and Highlands, caw, croak, and shriek about me, as the deep guttural, the broad drawl, and the high sharp yelp predominated by turns?—Odds-fish, man, have I not been speeched at by their orators, addressed by their senators, rebuked by their kirkmen? Have I not sate on the cutty-stool, mon [again resuming the northern dialect], and thought it grace of worthy Mas John Gillespie, that I was permitted to do penance in mine own privy chamber, instead of the face of the congregation? and wilt thou tell me, after all, that I cannot speak Scotch enough to baffle an Oxon Knight and his family?"

"May it please your Majesty,—I began by saying I was no judge of the Scottish language."

"Pshaw—it is mere envy; just so you said at Norton's that I was too courteous and civil for a young page—now you think me too rude."

"And there is a medium, if one could find it," said Albert, defending his opinion in the same tone in which the King attacked him; "so this morning, when you were in the woman's dress, you raised your petticoats rather unbecomingly high, as you waded through the first little stream; and when I told you of it, to mend the matter, you draggled through the next without raising them at all."

"O, the devil take the woman's dress!" said Charles; "I hope I shall never be driven to that disguise again. Why, my ugly face was enough to put gowns, caps, and kirtles, out of fashion for ever—the very dogs fled from me—Had I passed any hamlet that

had but five huts in it, I could not have escaped the cucking-stool. I was a libel on womanhood. These leathern conveniences are none of the gayest, but they are *propria quæ maribus;* and right glad am I to be repossessed of them. I can tell you, too, my friend, I shall resume all my masculine privileges with my proper habiliments; and as you say I have been too coarse to-night, I will behave myself like a courtier to Mistress Alice to-morrow. I made a sort of acquaintance with her already, when I seemed to be of the same sex with herself, and found out there are other Colonels in the wind besides you, Colonel Albert Lee."

"May it please your Majesty," said Albert—and then stopped short, from the difficulty of finding words to express the unpleasant nature of his feelings. They could not escape Charles; but he proceeded without scruple. "I pique myself on seeing as far into the hearts of young ladies as most folk, though God knows they are sometimes too deep for the wisest of us. But I mentioned to your sister in my character of fortune-teller,—thinking, poor simple man, that a country girl must have no one but her brother to dream about,—that she was anxious about a certain Colonel. I had hit the theme, but not the person; for I alluded to you, Albert; and I presume the blush was too deep ever to be given to a brother. So up she got, and away she flew from me like a lapwing. I can excuse her —for, looking at myself in the well, I think if I had met such a creature as I seemed, I should have called fire and fagot against it.—Now, what think you, Albert—

who can this Colonel be, that more than rivals you in your sister's affection?"

Albert, who well knew that the King's mode of thinking, where the fair sex was concerned, was far more gay than delicate, endeavoured to put a stop to the present topic, by a grave answer.

"His sister," he said, "had been in some measure educated with the son of her maternal uncle, Markham Everard; but as his father and he himself had adopted the cause of the roundheads, the families had in consequence been at variance; and any projects which might have been formerly entertained, were of course long since dismissed on all sides."

"You are wrong, Albert, you are wrong," said the King, pitilessly perusing his jest. "You Colonels, whether you wear blue or orange sashes, are too pretty fellows to be dismissed so easily, when once you have acquired an interest. But Mistress Alice, so pretty, and who wishes the restoration of the King with such a look and accent, as if she were an angel whose prayers must needs bring it down, must not be allowed to retain any thoughts of a canting roundhead—What say you—will you give me leave to take her to task about it?—After all, I am the party most concerned in maintaining true allegiance among my subjects; and if I gain the pretty maiden's good-will, that of the sweetheart's will soon follow. This was jolly King Edward's way—Edward the Fourth, you know. The king-making Earl of Warwick—the Cromwell of his day—dethroned him more than once; but he had the hearts of the merry dames of London, and

the purses and veins of the cockneys bled freely, till they brought him home again. How say you?—shall I shake off my northern slough, and speak with Alice in my own character, shewing what education and manners have done for me, to make the best amends they can for an ugly face?"

"May it please your Majesty," said Albert, in an altered and embarrassed tone, "I did not expect——"

Here he stopped, not able to find words adequate at the same time to express his sentiments, and respectful enough to the King, while in his father's house, and under his own protection.

"And what is it that Master Lee does not expect?" said Charles, with marked gravity on his part.

Again Albert attempted a reply, but advanced no farther than, "I would hope, if it please your Majesty" —when he again stopped short, his deep and hereditary respect for his sovereign, and his sense of the hospitality due to his misfortunes, preventing his giving utterance to his irritated feelings.

"And what does Colonel Albert Lee hope?" said Charles, in the same dry and cold manner in which he had before spoken.—"No answer?—Now, *I hope* that Colonel Lee does not see in a silly jest anything offensive to the honour of his family, since methinks that were an indifferent compliment to his sister, his father, and himself, not to mention Charles Stuart, whom he calls his King; and *I expect*, that I shall not be so hardly construed, as to be supposed capable of forgetting that Mistress Alice Lee is the daughter of my

faithful subject and host, and the sister of my guide and preserver.—Come, come, Albert," he added, changing at once to his naturally frank and unceremonious manner, "you forget how long I have been abroad, where men, women, and children, talk gallantry morning, noon, and night, with no more serious thought than just to pass away the time ; and I forget, too, that you are of the old-fashioned English school, a son after Sir Henry's own heart, and don't understand raillery upon such subjects.—But I ask your pardon, Albert, sincerely, if I have really hurt you."

So saying, he extended his hand to Colonel Lee, who, feeling he had been rather too hasty in construing the King's jest in an unpleasant sense, kissed it with reverence, and attempted an apology.

"Not a word—not a word," said the good-natured Prince, raising his penitent adherent as he attempted to kneel ; "we understand each other. You are somewhat afraid of the gay reputation which I acquired in Scotland ; but I assure you, I will be as stupid as you, or your cousin Colonel could desire, in presence of Mrs. Alice Lee, and only bestow my gallantry, should I have any to throw away, upon the pretty little waiting-maid who attended at supper—unless you should have monopolized her ear for your own benefit, Colonel Albert?"

"It is monopolized, sure enough, though not by me, if it please your Majesty, but by Joceline Joliffe, the under-keeper, whom we must not disoblige, as we have trusted him so far already, and may have occasion to

repose even entire confidence in him. I half think he suspects who Louis Kerneguy may in reality be."

"You are an engrossing set, you wooers of Woodstock," said the King, laughing. "Now, if I had a fancy, as a Frenchman would not fail to have in such a case, to make pretty speeches to the deaf old woman I saw in the kitchen, as a *pisaller*, I dare say I should be told that *her* ear was engrossed for Dr. Rochecliffe's sole use?"

"I marvel at your Majesty's good spirits," said Albert, "that, after a day of danger, fatigue, and accidents, you should feel the power of amusing yourself thus."

"That is to say, the groom of the chambers wishes his Majesty would go to sleep?—Well, one word or two on more serious business, and I have done.—I have been completely directed by you and Rochecliffe—I have changed my disguise from female to male upon the instant, and altered my destination from Hampshire to take shelter here—Do you still hold it the wiser course?"

"I have great confidence in Dr. Rochecliffe," replied Albert, "whose acquaintance with the scattered royalists enables him to gain the most accurate intelligence. His pride in the extent of his correspondence, and the complication of his plots and schemes for your Majesty's service, is indeed the very food he lives upon; but his sagacity is equal to his vanity. I repose, besides, the utmost faith in Joliffe. Of my father and sister I would say nothing; yet I would not, without

reason, extend the knowledge of your Majesty's person farther than it is indispensably necessary."

"Is it handsome in me," said Charles, pausing, "to withhold my full confidence from Sir Henry Lee?"

"Your Majesty heard of his almost death-swoon of last night—what would agitate him most deeply must not be hastily communicated."

"True; but are we safe from a visit of the red-coats —they have them in Woodstock as well as in Oxford?" said Charles.

"Dr. Rochecliffe says, not unwisely," answered Lee, "that it is best sitting near the fire when the chimney smokes; and that Woodstock, so lately in possession of the sequestrators, and still in the vicinity of the soldiers, will be less suspected, and more carelessly searched, than more distant corners, which might seem to promise more safety. Besides," he added, "Rochecliffe is in possession of curious and important news concerning the state of matters at Woodstock, highly favourable to your Majesty's being concealed in the palace for two or three days, till shipping is provided. The Parliament, or usurping Council of State, had sent down sequestrators, whom their own evil conscience, assisted, perhaps, by the tricks of some daring cavaliers, had frightened out of the Lodge, without much desire to come back again. Then the more formidable usurper, Cromwell, had granted a warrant of possession to Colonel Everard, who had only used it for the purpose of repossessing his uncle in the Lodge, and who kept watch in person

at the little borough, to see that Sir Henry was not disturbed."

"What! Mistress Alice's Colonel?" said the King —"that sounds alarming;—for grant that he keeps the other fellows at bay, think you not, Master Albert, he will have an hundred errands a-day to bring him here in person?"

"Dr. Rochecliffe says," answered Lee, "the treaty between Sir Henry and his nephew binds the latter not to approach the Lodge, unless invited;—indeed, it was not without great difficulty, and strongly arguing the good consequences it might produce to your Majesty's cause, that my father could be prevailed on to occupy Woodstock at all: but be assured he will be in no hurry to send an invitation to the Colonel."

"And be you assured that the Colonel will come without waiting for one," said Charles. "Folk cannot judge rightly where sisters are concerned—they are too familiar with the magnet to judge of its powers of attraction.—Everard will be here, as if drawn by cart-ropes—fetters, not to talk of promises, will not hold him—and then, methinks, we are in some danger."

"I hope not," said Albert. "In the first place, I know Markham is a slave to his word; besides, were any chance to bring him here, I think I could pass your Majesty upon him without difficulty, as Louis Kerneguy. Then, although my cousin and I have not been on good terms for these some years, I believe him incapable of betraying your Majesty; and lastly, if I saw the least danger of it, I would, were he ten times the son of my

mother's sister, run my sword through his body, ere he had time to execute his purpose."

"There is but another question," said Charles, "and I will release you, Albert:—You seem to think yourself secure from search. It may be so; but, in any other country, this tale of goblins which is flying about would bring down priests and ministers of justice to examine the reality of the story, and mobs of idle people to satisfy their curiosity."

"Respecting the first, sir, we hope and understand that Colonel Everard's influence will prevent any immediate inquiry, for the sake of preserving undisturbed the peace of his uncle's family; and as for any one coming without some sort of authority, the whole neighbours have so much love and fear of my father, and are, besides, so horribly alarmed about the goblins of Woodstock, that fear will silence curiosity."

"On the whole, then," said Charles, "the chances of safety seem to be in favour of the plan we have adopted, which is all I can hope for in a condition where absolute safety is out of the question. The Bishop recommended Dr. Rochecliffe as one of the most ingenious, boldest, and most loyal sons of the Church of England; you, Albert Lee, have marked your fidelity by a hundred proofs. To you and your local knowledge I submit myself.—And now, prepare our arms—alive I will not be taken; yet I will not believe that a son of the King of England, and heir of her throne, could be destined to danger in his own palace, and under the guard of the loyal Lees."

Albert Lee laid pistols and swords in readiness by the King's bed and his own; and Charles, after some slight apology, took his place in the larger and better bed, with a sigh of pleasure, as from one who had not lately enjoyed such an indulgence. He bid good night to his faithful attendant, who deposited himself on his truckle; and both monarch and subject were soon fast asleep.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SECOND.

Give Sir Nicholas Threlkeld praise;
Hear it, good man, old in days,
Thou tree of succour and of rest
To this young bird that was distressed;
Beneath thy branches he did stay;
And he was free to sport and play,
When falcons were abroad for prey.

WORDSWORTH.

THE fugitive Prince slept, in spite of danger, with the profound repose which youth and fatigue inspire. But the young cavalier, his guide and guard, spent a more restless night, starting from time to time, and listening; anxious, notwithstanding Doctor Rochecliffe's assurances, to procure yet more particular knowledge concern-

ing the state of things around them, than he had been yet able to collect.

He rose early after daybreak; but although he moved with as little noise as was possible, the slumbers of the hunted Prince were easily disturbed. He started up in his bed, and asked if there was any alarm.

"None, please your Majesty," replied Lee; "only, thinking on the questions your Majesty was asking last night, and the various chances there are of your Majesty's safety being endangered from unforeseen accidents, I thought of going thus early, both to communicate with Doctor Rochecliffe, and to keep such a look-out as befits the place, where are lodged for the time the Fortunes of England. I fear I must request of your Majesty, for your own gracious security, that you have the goodness to condescend to secure the door with your own hand after I go out."

"Oh, talk not to Majesty, for Heaven's sake, dear Albert!" answered the poor King, endeavouring in vain to put on a part of his clothes in order to traverse the room.—"When a king's doublet and hose are so ragged that he can no more find his way into them than he could have travelled through the forest of Deane without a guide, good faith, there should be an end of Majesty, until it chances to be better accommodated. Besides, there is the chance of these big words bolting out at unawares, when there are ears to hear them whom we might think dangerous."

"Your commands shall be obeyed," said Lee, who

had now succeeded in opening the door; from which he took his departure, leaving the King, who had hustled along the floor for that purpose, with his dress wofully ill arranged, to make it fast again behind him, and begging him in no case to open to any one, unless he or Rochecliffe were of the party who summoned him.

Albert then set out in quest of Dr. Rochecliffe's apartment, which was only known to himself and the faithful Joliffe, and had at different times accommodated that steady churchman with a place of concealment, when, from his bold and busy temper, which led him into the most extensive and hazardous machinations on the King's behalf, he had been strictly sought after by the opposite party. Of late, the inquest after him had died entirely away, as he had prudently withdrawn himself from the scene of his intrigues. Since the loss of the battle of Worcester, he had been afloat again, and more active than ever; and had, by friends and correspondents, and especially the Bishop of ——, been the means of directing the King's flight towards Woodstock, although it was not until the very day of his arrival that he could promise him a safe reception at that ancient mansion.

Albert Lee, though he revered both the undaunted spirit and ready resources of the bustling and intriguing churchman, felt he had not been enabled by him to answer some of Charles's questions yesternight, in a way so distinct as one trusted with the King's safety ought to have done; and it was now his object to make himself personally acquainted, if possible, with the

various bearings of so weighty a matter, as became a man on whom so much of the responsibility was likely to descend.

Even his local knowledge was scarce adequate to find the Doctor's secret apartment, had he not traced his way after a genial flavour of roasted game through divers blind passages, and up and down certain very useless stairs, through cupboards and hatchways, and so forth, to a species of sanctum sanctorum, where Joceline Joliffe was ministering to the good doctor a solemn breakfast of wild-fowl, with a cup of small beer stirred with a sprig of rosemary, which Doctor Rochecliffe preferred to all strong potations. Beside him sat Bevis on his tail, slobbering and looking amiable, moved by the rare smell of the breakfast, which had quite overcome his native dignity of disposition.

The chamber in which the doctor had established himself was a little octangular room, with walls of great thickness, within which were fabricated various issues leading in different directions, and communicating with different parts of the building. Around him were packages with arms, and near him one small barrel, as it seemed, of gunpowder; many papers in different parcels, and several keys for correspondence in cipher; two or three scrolls covered with hieroglyphics were also beside him, which Albert took for plans of nativity; and various models of machinery, in which Doctor Rochecliffe was an adept. There were also tools of various kinds, masks, cloaks, and a dark lantern, and a number of other indescribable trinkets belonging to the trade

of a daring plotter in dangerous times. Last there was a casket with gold and silver coin of different countries, which was left carelessly open as if it were the least of Doctor Rochecliffe's concern, although his habits in general announced narrow circumstances, if not actual poverty. Close by the divine's plate lay a Bible and Prayerbook, with some proof-sheets, as they are technically called, seemingly fresh from the press. There were also within the reach of his hand a dirk, or Scottish poniard, a powder-horn, and a musketoon, or blunderbuss, with a pair of handsome pocket-pistols. In the midst of this miscellaneous collection, the doctor sat eating his breakfast, with great appetite, as little dismayed by the various implements of danger around him, as a workman is when accustomed to the perils of a gunpowder manufactory.

"Soh, young gentleman," he said, getting up and extending his hand, "are you come to breakfast with me in good fellowship, or to spoil my meal this morning, as you did my supper last night by asking untimely questions?"

"I will pick a bone with you, with all my heart;" said Albert; "and if you please, doctor, I would ask some questions which seem not quite untimely."

So saying, he sat down, and assisted the doctor in giving a very satisfactory account of a brace of wild-ducks and a leash of teal. Bevis, who maintained his place with great patience and insinuation, had his share of a collop, which was also placed on the well-furnished

board; for, like most highbred dogs, he declined eating waterfowl.

"Come hither then, Albert Lee," said the doctor, laying down his knife and fork, and plucking the towel from his throat, so soon as Joceline was withdrawn; "thou art still the same lad thou wert when I was thy tutor—never satisfied with having got a grammar rule, but always persecuting me with questions why the rule stood so, and not otherwise—over-curious after information which thou couldst not comprehend, as Bevis slobbered and whined for the duck-wing which he could not eat."

"I hope you will find me more reasonable, doctor," answered Albert; "and at the same time, that you will recollect I am not now *sub ferula*, but am placed in circumstances where I am not at liberty to act upon the *ipse dixit* of any man, unless my own judgment be convinced. I shall deserve richly to be hanged, drawn, and quartered, should any misfortune happen by my misgovernment in this business."

"And it is therefore, Albert, that I would have thee trust the whole to me, without interfering. Thou sayest, forsooth, thou art not *sub ferula;* but recollect that while you have been fighting in the field, I have been plotting in the study—that I know all the combinations of the King's friends, ay, and all the motions of his enemies, as well as a spider knows every mesh of his web. Think of my experience, man. Not a cavalier in the land but has heard of Rochecliffe the Plotter. I have been a main limb in everything that

has been attempted since forty-two—penned declarations, conducted correspondence, communicated with chiefs, recruited followers, commissioned arms, levied money, appointed rendezvouses. I was in the Western Rising; and before that, in the City Petition, and in Sir John Owen's stir in Wales; in short, almost in every plot for the King, since Tomkins and Challoner's matter."

"But were not all these plots unsuccessful?" said Albert; "and were not Tomkins and Challoner hanged, doctor?"

"Yes, my young friend," answered the doctor, gravely, "as many others have been with whom I have acted; but only because they did not follow my advice implicitly. You never heard that I was hanged myself."

"The time may come, doctor," said Albert; "The pitcher goes oft to the well—The proverb, as my father would say, is somewhat musty. But I, too, have some confidence in my own judgment; and, much as I honour the church, I cannot altogether subscribe to passive obedience. I will tell you in one word what points I must have explanation on; and it will remain with you to give it, or to return a message to the King that you will not explain your plan; in which case, if he acts by my advice, he will leave Woodstock, and resume his purpose of getting to the coast without delay."

"Well, then" said the doctor, "thou suspicious monster, make thy demands, and, if they be such as I

can answer without betraying confidence, I will reply to them."

"In the first place, then, what is all this story about ghosts, and witchcrafts, and apparitions? and do you consider it as safe for his Majesty to stay in a house subject to such visitations, real or pretended?"

"You must be satisfied with my answer *in verbo sacerdotis*—the circumstances you allude to will not give the least annoyance to Woodstock during the King's residence. I cannot explain farther; but for this I will be bound, at the risk of my neck."

"Then," said Lee, "we must take Doctor Rochecliffe's bail that the devil will keep the peace towards our Sovereign Lord the King—good. Now there lurked about this house the greater part of yesterday, and perhaps slept here, a fellow called Tomkins—a bitter Independent, and a secretary, or clerk, or something or other, to the regicide dog Desborough. The man is well known—a wild ranter in religious opinions, but in private affairs far-sighted, cunning, and interested even as any rogue of them all."

"Be assured we will avail ourselves of his crazy fanaticism to mislead his wicked cunning;—a child may lead a hog, if it has wit to fasten a cord to the ring in its nose," replied the doctor.

"You may be deceived," said Albert; "the age has many such as this fellow, whose views of the spiritual and temporal world are so different, that they resemble the eyes of a squinting man; one of which, oblique and distorted, sees nothing but the end of his nose, while

the other, instead of partaking the same defect, views strongly, sharply, and acutely, whatever is subjected to its scrutiny."

"But we will put a patch on the better eye," said the doctor, "and he shall only be allowed to speculate with the imperfect optic. You must know, this fellow has always seen the greatest number, and the most hideous apparitions; he has not the courage of a cat in such matters, though stout enough when he hath temporal antagonists before him. I have placed him under the charge of Joceline Joliffe, who, betwixt plying him with sack and ghost-stories, would make him incapable of knowing what was done, if you were to proclaim the King in his presence."

"But why keep such a fellow here at all?"

"Oh, sir, content you;—he lies leaguer, as a sort of ambassador for his worthy masters, and we are secure from any intrusion so long as they get all the news of Woodstock from trusty Tomkins."

"I know Joceline's honesty well," said Albert; "and if he can assure me that he will keep a watch over this fellow, I will so far trust in him. He does not know the depth of the stake, 'tis true, but that my life is concerned will be quite enough to keep him vigilant.—Well, then, I proceed:—What if Markham Everard comes down on us?"

"We have his word to the contrary," answered Rochecliffe—"his word of honour, transmitted by his friend:—Do you think it likely he will break it?"

"I hold him incapable of doing so," answered Albert;

"and, besides, I think Markham would make no bad use of anything which might come to his knowledge—Yet God forbid we should be under the necessity of trusting any who ever wore the Parliament's colours in a matter of such dear concernment!"

"Amen!" said the doctor.—"Are your doubts silenced now?"

"I still have an objection," said Albert, "to yonder impudent rakehelly fellow, styling himself a cavalier, who pushed himself on our company last night, and gained my father's heart by a story of the storm of Brentford, which I daresay the rogue never saw."

"You mistake him, dear Albert," replied Rochecliffe—"Roger Wildrake, although till of late I only knew him by name, is a gentleman, was bred at the Inns of Court, and spent his estate in the King's service."

"Or rather in the devil's service," said Albert. "It is such fellows as he, who, sunk from the license of their military habits into idle debauched ruffians, infest the land with riots and robberies, brawl in hedge ale-houses and cellars where strong waters are sold at midnight, and, with their deep oaths, their hot loyalty, and their drunken valour, make decent men abominate the very name of cavalier."

"Alas!" said the doctor, "it is but too true; but what can you expect? When the higher and more qualified classes are broken down and mingled undistinguishably with the lower orders, they are apt to lose the most valuable marks of their quality in the general confusion of morals and manners—just as a handful of

silver medals will become defaced and discoloured if jumbled about among the vulgar copper coin. Even the prime medal of all, which we royalists would so willingly wear next our very hearts, has not, perhaps, entirely escaped some deterioration—But let other tongues than mine speak on that subject."

Albert Lee paused deeply after having heard these communications on the part of Rochecliffe. "Doctor," he said, "it is generally agreed, even by some who think you may occasionally have been a little over busy in putting men upon dangerous actions ——"

"May God forgive them who entertain so false an opinion of me!" said the doctor.

"——That, nevertheless, you have done and suffered more in the King's behalf than any man of your function."

"They do me but justice there," said Doctor Rochecliffe—"absolute justice."

"I am therefore disposed to abide by your opinion, if, all things considered, you think it safe that we should remain at Woodstock."

"That is not the question," answered the divine.

"And what is the question, then?" replied the young soldier.

"Whether any safer course can be pointed out. I grieve to say, that the question must be comparative, as to the point of option. Absolute safety is—alas the while!—out of the question on all sides. Now, I say Woodstock is, fenced and guarded as at present, by far the most preferable place of concealment."

"Enough," replied Albert, "I give up to you the question, as to a person whose knowledge of such important affairs, not to mention your age and experience, is more intimate and extensive than mine can be."

"You do well," answered Rochecliffe; "and if others had acted with the like distrust of their own knowledge, and confidence in competent persons, it had been better for the age. This makes Understanding bar himself up within his fortalice, and Wit betake himself to his high tower." (Here he looked around his cell with an air of self-complacence.) "The wise man foreseeth the tempest, and hideth himself."

"Doctor," said Albert, "let our foresight serve others far more precious than either of us. Let me ask you, if you have well considered whether our precious charge should remain in society with the family, or betake himself to some of the more hidden corners of the house?"

"Hum!" said the Doctor, with an air of deep reflection—"I think he will be safest as Louis Kerneguy, keeping himself close beside you——"

"I fear it will be necessary," added Albert, "that I scout abroad a little, and shew myself in some distant part of the country, lest, coming here in quest of me, they should find higher game."

"Pray do not interrupt me—Keeping himself close beside you or your father, in or near to Victor Lee's apartment, from which you are aware he can make a ready escape, should danger approach. This occurs

to me as best for the present—I hope to hear of the vessel to-day—to-morrow at farthest."

Albert Lee bid the active but opinionated man good morrow; admiring how this species of intrigue had become a sort of element in which the doctor seemed to enjoy himself, notwithstanding all that the poet has said concerning the horrors which intervene betwixt the conception and execution of a conspiracy.

In returning from Doctor Rochecliffe's sanctuary, he met with Joceline, who was anxiously seeking him. "The young Scotch gentleman," he said, in a mysterious manner, "has arisen from bed, and, hearing me pass, he called me into his apartment."

"Well," replied Albert, "I will see him presently."

"And he asked me for fresh linen and clothes. Now, sir, he is like a man who is quite accustomed to be obeyed, so I gave him a suit which happened to be in a wardrobe in the west tower, and some of your linen to conform; and when he was dressed he commanded me to shew him to the presence of Sir Henry Lee and my young lady.—I would have said something, sir, about waiting till you came back, but he pulled me good-naturedly by the hair (as, indeed, he has a rare humour of his own), and told me he was guest to Master Albert Lee, and not his prisoner; so, sir, though I thought you might be displeased with me for giving him the means of stirring abroad, and perhaps being seen by those who should not see him, what could I say?"

"You are a sensible fellow, Joceline, and comprehend

always what is recommended to you.—This youth will not be controlled, I fear, by either of us; but we must look the closer after his safety—You keep your watch over that prying fellow the steward?"

"Trust him to my care—on that side have no fear. —But ah, sir! I would we had the young Scot in his old clothes again, for the riding-suit of yours which he now wears hath set him off in other-guess fashion."

From the manner in which the faithful dependent expressed himself, Albert saw that he suspected who the Scottish page in reality was; yet he did not think it proper to acknowledge to him a fact of such importance, secure as he was equally of his fidelity, whether explicitly trusted to the full extent, or left to his own conjectures. Full of anxious thought, he went to the apartment of Victor Lee, in which Joliffe told him he would find the party assembled. The sound of laughter, as he laid his hand on the lock of the door, almost made him start, so singularly did it jar with the doubtful and melancholy reflections which engaged his own mind. He entered, and found his father in high good humour, laughing and conversing freely with his young charge, whose appearance was, indeed, so much changed to the better in externals, that it seemed scarce possible a night's rest, a toilet, and a suit of decent clothes, could have done so much in his favour in so short a time. It could not, however, be imputed to the mere alteration of dress, although that, no doubt, had its effect. There was nothing splendid in that which Louis Kerneguy (we continue to call him by his as-

sumed name) now wore. It was merely a riding-suit of gray cloth, with some silver lace, in the fashion of a country gentleman of the time. But it happened to fit him very well, and to become his very dark complexion, especially as he now held up his head, and used the manners, not only of a well-behaved but of a highly-accomplished gentleman. When he moved, his clumsy and awkward limp was exchanged for a sort of shuffle, which, as it might be the consequence of a wound in those perilous times, had rather an interesting than an ungainly effect. At least it was as genteel an expression that the party had been overhard travelled, as the most polite pedestrian could propose to himself.

The features of the Wanderer were harsh as ever, but his red shock peruke, for such it proved, was laid aside, his sable elf-locks were trained, by a little of Joceline's assistance, into curls, and his fine black eyes shone from among the shade of these curls, and corresponded with the animated, though not handsome, character of the whole head. In his conversation, he had laid aside all the coarseness of dialect which he had so strongly affected on the preceding evening; and although he continued to speak a little Scotch, for the support of his character as a young gentleman of that nation, yet it was not in a degree which rendered his speech either uncouth or unintelligible, but merely afforded a certain Doric tinge essential to the personage he represented. No person on earth could better understand the society in which he moved; exile had made him acquainted with life in all its shades and

varieties—his spirits, if not uniform, were elastic—he had that species of Epicurean philosophy, which, even in the most extreme difficulties and dangers, can in an interval of ease, however brief, avail itself of the enjoyments of the moment—he was, in short, in youth and misfortune, as afterwards in his regal condition, a good-humoured but hard-hearted voluptuary—wise, save where his passions intervened—beneficent, save when prodigality had deprived him of the means, or prejudice of the wish, to confer benefits—his faults such as might often have drawn down hatred, but that they were mingled with so much urbanity, that the injured person felt it impossible to retain the full sense of his wrongs.

Albert Lee found the party, consisting of his father, sister, and the supposed page, seated by the breakfast-table, at which he also took his place. He was a pensive and anxious beholder of what passed, while the page, who had already completely gained the heart of the good old cavalier, by mimicking the manner in which the Scottish divines preached in favour of Ma gude Lord Marquis of Argyle and the Solemn League and Covenant, was now endeavouring to interest the fair Alice by such anecdotes, partly of warlike and perilous adventure, as possessed the same degree of interest for the female ear which they have had ever since Desdemona's days. But it was not only of dangers by land and sea that the disguised page spoke ; but much more, and much oftener, on foreign revels, banquets, balls, where the pride of France, of Spain, or of the Low

Countries, was exhibited in the eyes of their most eminent beauties. Alice being a very young girl, who, in consequence of the Civil War, had been almost entirely educated in the country, and often in great seclusion, it was certainly no wonder that she should listen with willing ears, and a ready smile, to what the young gentleman, their guest, and her brother's protégé, told with so much gaiety, and mingled with such a shade of dangerous adventure, and occasionally of serious reflection, as prevented the discourse from being regarded as merely light and frivolous.

In a word, Sir Henry Lee laughed, Alice smiled from time to time, and all were satisfied but Albert, who would himself, however, have been scarce able to allege a sufficient reason for his depression of spirits.

The materials of breakfast were at last removed, under the active superintendence of the neat-handed Phœbe, who looked over her shoulder, and lingered more than once, to listen to the fluent discourse of their new guest, whom, on the preceding evening, she had, while in attendance at supper, accounted one of the most stupid inmates to whom the gates of Woodstock had been opened since the times of Fair Rosamond.

Louis Kerneguy then, when they were left only four in the chamber, without the interruption of domestics, and the successive bustle occasioned by the discussion and removal of the morning meal, became apparently sensible, that his friend and ostensible patron Albert ought not altogether to be suffered to drop to leeward in the conversation, while he was himself successfully

engaging the attention of those members of his family to whom he had become so recently known. He went behind his chair, therefore, and, leaning on the back, said with a good-humoured tone, which made his purpose entirely intelligible,—

"Either my good friend, guide, and patron, has heard worse news this morning than he cares to tell us, or he must have stumbled over my tattered jerkin and leathern hose, and acquired, by contact, the whole mass of stupidity which I threw off last night with those most dolorous garments. Cheer up, my dear Colonel Albert, if your affectionate page may presume to say so—you are in company with those whose society, dear to strangers, must be doubly so to you. Odds-fish, man, cheer up! I have seen you gay on a biscuit and a mouthful of water-cresses—don't let your heart fail you on Rhenish wine and venison."

"Dear Louis," said Albert, rousing himself into exertion, and somewhat ashamed of his own silence, "I have slept worse, and been astir earlier than you."

"Be it so," said his father; "yet I hold it no good excuse for your sullen silence. Albert, you have met your sister and me, so long separated from you, so anxious on your behalf, almost like mere strangers, and yet you are returned safe to us, and you find us well."

"Returned indeed—but for safety, my dear father, that word must be a stranger to us Worcester folk for some time. However, it is not my own safety about which I am anxious."

"About whose, then, should you be anxious?—All

accounts agree that the King is safe out of the dogs' jaws."

"Not without some danger though," muttered Louis, thinking of his encounter with Bevis on the preceding evening.

"No, not without danger, indeed," echoed the knight; "but, as old Will says,—

> There's such divinity doth hedge a king,
> That treason dares not peep at what it would.

No, no—thank God, that's cared for; our Hope and Fortune is escaped, so all news affirm, escaped from Bristol—if I thought otherwise, Albert, I should be as sad as you are. For the rest of it, I have lurked a month in this house when discovery would have been death, and that is no longer since than after Lord Holland and the Duke of Buckingham's rising at Kingston; and hang me, if I thought once of twisting my brow into such a tragic fold as yours, but cocked my hat at misfortune as a cavalier should."

"If I might put in a word," said Louis, "it would be to assure Colonel Albert Lee that I verily believe the King would think his own hap, wherever he may be, much the worse that his best subjects were seized with dejection on his account."

"You answer boldly on the King's part, young man," said Sir Henry.

"Oh, my father was meikle about the King's hand," answered Louis, recollecting his present character.

"No wonder, then," said Sir Henry, "that you have so soon recovered your good spirits and good breeding,

when you heard of his Majesty's escape. Why, you are no more like the lad we saw last night, than the best hunter I ever had was like a dray-horse."

"Oh, there is much in rest, and food, and grooming," answered Louis. "You would hardly know the tired jade you dismounted from last night, when she is brought out prancing and neighing the next morning, rested, refreshed, and ready to start again—especially if the brute hath some good blood, for such pick up unco fast."

"Well, then, but since thy father was a courtier, and thou hast learned, I think, something of the trade, tell us a little, Master Kerneguy, of him we love most to hear about—the King; we are all safe and secret, you need not be afraid. He was a hopeful youth; I trust his flourishing blossom now gives promise of fruit?"

As the knight spoke, Louis bent his eyes on the ground, and seemed at first uncertain what to answer. But, admirable at extricating himself from such dilemmas, he replied, "That he really could not presume to speak on such a subject in the presence of his patron, Colonel Albert Lee, who must be a much better judge of the character of King Charles than he could pretend to be."

Albert was accordingly next assailed by the knight, seconded by Alice, for some account of his Majesty's character.

"I will speak but according to facts," said Albert; "and then I must be acquitted of partiality. If the

King had not possessed enterprise and military skill, he never would have attempted the expedition to Worcester;—had he not had personal courage, he had not so long disputed the battle that Cromwell almost judged it lost. That he possesses prudence and patience, must be argued from the circumstances attending his flight; and that he has the love of his subjects is evident, since, necessarily known to many, he has been betrayed by none."

"For shame, Albert!" replied his sister; "is that the way a good cavalier doles out the character of his Prince, applying an instance at every concession, like a pedlar measuring linen with his rod?—Out upon you!—no wonder you were beaten, if you fought as coldly for your King as you now talk for him."

"I did my best to trace a likeness from what I have seen and known of the original, sister Alice," replied her brother.—"If you would have a fancy portrait, you must get an artist of more imagination than I have to draw it for you."

"I will be that artist myself," said Alice, "and in *my* portrait, our Monarch shall shew all that he ought to be, having such high pretensions—all that he must be, being so loftily descended—all that I am sure he is, and that every loyal heart in the kingdom ought to believe him."

"Well said, Alice," quoth the old knight.—"Look thou upon this picture, and on this!—Here is our young friend shall judge. I wager my best nag—that is, I would wager him had I one left—that Alice proves the

better painter of the two.—My son's brain is still misty, I think, since his defeat—he has not got the smoke of Worcester out of it. Plague on thee !—a young man, and cast down for one beating ! Had you been banged twenty times like me, it had been time to look grave. —But come, Alice, forward ; the colours are mixed on your pallet—forward with something that shall shew like one of Vandyke's living portraits, placed beside the dull dry presentation there of our ancestor Victor Lee."

Alice, it must be observed, had been educated by her father in the notions of high, and even exaggerated loyalty, which characterised the cavaliers, and she was really an enthusiast in the royal cause. But besides, she was in good spirits at her brother's happy return, and wished to prolong the gay humour, in which her father had of late scarcely ever indulged.

" Well then," she said, " though I am no Apelles, I will try to paint an Alexander, such as I hope, and am determined to believe, exists in the person of our exiled sovereign, soon I trust to be restored. And I will not go farther than his own family. He shall have all the chivalrous courage, all the warlike skill, of Henry of France, his grandfather, in order to place him on the throne ; all his benevolence, love of his people, patience even of unpleasing advice, sacrifice of his own wishes and pleasures to the commonweal, that, seated there, he may be blest while living, and so long remembered when dead, that for ages after it shall be thought sacrilege to breathe an aspersion against the throne which

he has occupied! Long after he is dead, while there remains an old man who has seen him, were the condition of that survivor no higher than a groom or a menial, his age shall be provided for at the public charge, and his gray hairs regarded with more distinction than an earl's coronet, because he remembers the Second Charles, the monarch of every heart in England!"

While Alice spoke, she was hardly conscious of the presence of any one save her father and brother; for the page withdrew himself somewhat from the circle,

And there was nothing to remind her of him. She gave the reins, therefore, to her enthusiasm, and as the tears glittered in her eye, and her beautiful features became animated, she seemed like a descended cherub proclaiming the virtues of a patriot monarch. The person chiefly interested in her description held himself back, as we have said, and concealed his own features, yet so as to preserve a full view of the beautiful speaker.

Albert Lee, conscious in whose presence this eulogium was pronounced, was much embarrassed; but his father, all whose feelings were flattered by the panegyric, was in rapture.

"So much for the *King*, Alice," he said, "and now for the *Man*."

"For the man," replied Alice, in the same tone, "need I wish him more than the paternal virtues of his unhappy father, of whom his worst enemies have recorded, that if moral virtues and religious faith were to be selected as the qualities which merited a crown, no man could plead the possession of them in a higher

or more indisputable degree. Temperate, wise, and frugal, yet munificent in rewarding merit—a friend to letters and the muses, but a severe discourager of the misuse of such gifts—a worthy gentleman—a kind master—the best friend, the best father, the best Christian——" Her voice began to falter, and her father's handkerchief was already at his eyes.

"He was, girl—he was!" exclaimed Sir Henry; "but no more on't, I charge ye—no more on't—enough; let his son but possess his virtues, with better advisers, and better fortunes, and he will be all that England, in her warmest wishes, could desire."

There was a pause after this; for Alice felt as if she had spoken too frankly and too zealously, for her sex and youth. Sir Henry was occupied in melancholy recollections on the fate of his late sovereign, while Kerneguy and his supposed patron felt embarrassed, perhaps from a consciousness that the real Charles fell far short of his ideal character, as designed in such glowing colours. In some cases, exaggerated or unappropriate praise becomes the most severe satire.

But such reflections were not of a nature to be long willingly cherished by the person, to whom they might have been of great advantage. He assumed a tone of raillery, which is, perhaps, the readiest mode of escaping from the feelings of self-reproof. "Every cavalier," he said, "should bend his knee to thank Mistress Alice Lee for having made such a flattering portrait of the King their master, by laying under contribution for his benefit the virtues of all his ancestors; only there was

one point he would not have expected a female painter to have passed over in silence. When she made him, in right of his grandfather and father, a muster of royal and individual excellences, why could she not have endowed him at the same time with his mother's personal charms? Why should not the son of Henrietta Maria, the finest woman of her day, add the recommendations of a handsome face and figure to his internal qualities? he had the same hereditary title to good looks as to mental qualifications; and the picture, with such an addition, would be perfect in its way—and God send it might be a resemblance!"

"I understand you, Master Kerneguy," said Alice, "but I am no fairy, to bestow, as those do in the nursery tales, gifts which Providence has denied. I am woman enough to have made inquiries on the subject, and I know the general report is, that the King, to have been the son of such handsome parents, is unusually hard-favoured."

"Good God, sister!" said Albert, starting impatiently from his seat.

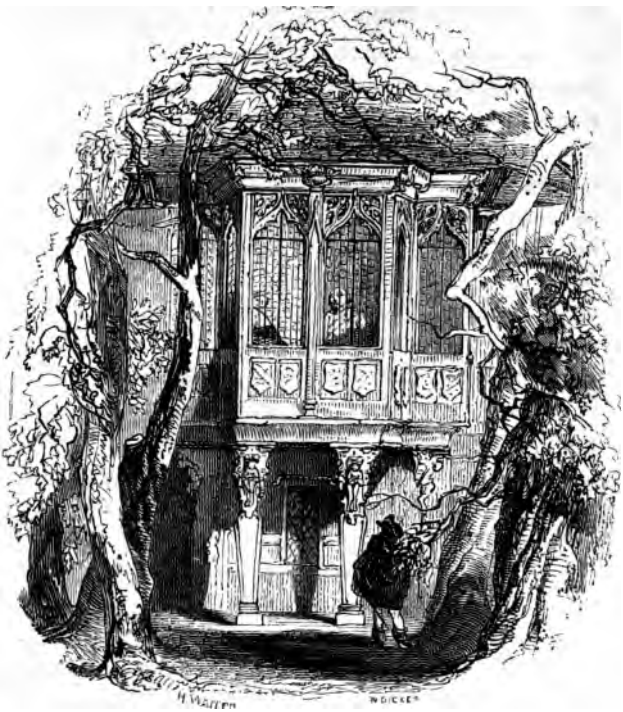
"Why, you yourself told me so," said Alice, surprised at the emotion he testified; "and you said——"

"This is intolerable," muttered Albert; "I must out to speak with Joceline without delay—Louis" (with an imploring look to Kerneguy), you will surely come with me?"

"I would with all my heart," said Kerneguy, smiling maliciously; "but you see how I suffer still from lameness.—Nay, nay, Albert," he whispered, resisting

young Lee's attempt to prevail on him to leave the room, "can you suppose I am fool enough to be hurt by this?—on the contrary, I have a desire of profiting by it."

"May God grant it!" said Lee to himself, as he left the room—"it will be the first lecture you ever profited by; and the devil confound the plots and plotters who made me bring you to this place!" So saying, he carried his discontent forth into the Park.



CHAPTER THE TWENTY-THIRD.

For there, they say, he daily doth frequent
With unrestrained loose companions;
While he, young, wanton, and effeminate boy,
Takes on the point of honour, to support
So dissolute a crew. RICHARD II.

THE conversation which Albert had in vain endeavoured to interrupt, flowed on in the same course after he had

left the room. It entertained Louis Kerneguy; for personal vanity, or an over sensitiveness to deserved reproof, were not among the faults of his character, and were indeed incompatible with an understanding which, combined with more strength of principle, steadiness of exertion, and self-denial, might have placed Charles high on the list of English monarchs. On the other hand, Sir Henry listened with natural delight to the noble sentiments uttered by a being so beloved as his daughter. His own parts were rather steady than brilliant; and he had that species of imagination which is not easily excited without the action of another, as the electrical globe only scintillates when rubbed against its cushion. He was well pleased, therefore, when Kerneguy pursued the conversation, by observing that Mistress Alice Lee had not explained how the same good fairy that conferred moral qualities, could not also remove corporeal blemishes.

"You mistake, sir," said Alice. "I confer nothing. I do but attempt to paint our King such as I *hope* he is—such as I am sure he *may* be, should he himself desire to be so. The same general report which speaks of his countenance as unprepossessing, describes his talents as being of the first order. He has, therefore, the means of arriving at excellence, should he cultivate them sedulously and employ them usefully—should he rule his passions and be guided by his understanding. Every good man cannot be wise; but it is in the power of every wise man, if he pleases, to be as eminent for virtue as for talent."

Young Kerneguy rose briskly, and took a turn through the room; and ere the knight could make any observation on the singular vivacity in which he had indulged, he threw himself again into his chair, and said, in rather an altered tone of voice—"It seems, then, Mistress Alice Lee, that the good friends who have described this poor King to you, have been as unfavourable in their account of his morals as of his person?"

"The truth must be better known to you, sir," said Alice, "than it can be to me. Some rumours there have been which accuse him of a license, which, whatever allowance flatterers make for it, does not, to say the least, become the son of the Martyr—I shall be happy to have these contradicted on good authority."

"I am surprised at your folly," said Sir Henry Lee, "in hinting at such things, Alice; a pack of scandal, invented by the rascals who have usurped the government—a thing devised by the enemy."

"Nay, sir," said Kerneguy, laughing, "we must not let our zeal charge the enemy with more scandal than they actually deserve. Mistress Alice has put the question to me. I can only answer, that no one can be more devotedly attached to the King than I myself,—that I am very partial to his merits and blind to his defects;—and that, in short, I would be the last man in the world to give up his cause where it was tenable. Nevertheless, I must confess, that if all his grandfather of Navarre's morals have not descended to him, this poor King has somehow inherited a share of the specks that were thought to dim the lustre of that great Prince

—that Charles is a little soft-hearted, or so, where beauty is concerned.—Do not blame him too severely, pretty Mistress Alice; when a man's hard fate has driven him among thorns, it were surely hard to prevent him from trifling with the few roses he may find among them?"

Alice, who probably thought the conversation had gone far enough, rose while Master Kerneguy was speaking, and was leaving the room before he had finished, without apparently hearing the interrogation with which he concluded. Her father approved of her departure, not thinking the turn which Kerneguy had given to the discourse altogether fit for her presence; and, desirous civilly to break off the conversation, "I see," he said, "this is about the time, when, as Will says, the household affairs will call my daughter hence; I will therefore challenge you, young gentleman, to stretch your limbs in a little exercise with me, either at single rapier, or rapier and poniard, back-sword, spadroon, or your national weapons of broadsword and target; for all, or any of which, I think we will find implements in the hall."

It would be too high a distinction, Master Kerneguy said, for a poor page to be permitted to try a passage of arms with a knight so renowned as Sir Henry Lee, and he hoped to enjoy so great an honour before he left Woodstock; but at the present moment his lameness continued to give him so much pain, that he should shame himself in the attempt.

Sir Henry then offered to read him a play of Shak-

speare, and for this purpose turned up King Richard II. But hardly had he commenced with

Old John of Gaunt, time-honoured Lancaster,

when the young gentleman was seized with such an uncontrollable fit of the cramp as could only be relieved by immediate exercise. He therefore begged permission to be allowed to saunter abroad for a little while, if Sir Henry Lee considered he might venture without danger.

"I can answer for the two or three of our people that are still left about the place," said Sir Henry; "and I know my son has disposed them so as to be constantly on the watch. If you hear the bell toll at the Lodge, I advise you to come straight home by the way of the King's Oak, which you see in yonder glade towering above the rest of the trees. We will have some one stationed there to introduce you secretly into the house."

The page listened to these cautions with the impatience of a schoolboy, who, desirous of enjoying his holiday, hears without marking the advice of tutor or parent, about taking care not to catch cold and so forth.

The absence of Alice Lee had removed all which had rendered the interior of the Lodge agreeable, and the mercurial young page fled with precipitation from the exercise and amusement which Sir Henry had proposed. He girded on his rapier, and threw his cloak, or rather that which belonged to his borrowed suit, about him, bringing up the lower part so as to muffle the face, and shew only the eyes over it, which was a

common way of wearing them in those days, both in streets, in the country, and in public places, when men had a mind to be private, and to avoid interruption from salutations and greetings in the market-place. He hurried across the open space which divided the front of the Lodge from the wood, with the haste of a bird escaped from the cage, which, though joyful at its liberation, is at the same time sensible of its need of protection and shelter. The wood seemed to afford these to the human fugitive, as it might have done to the bird in question.

When under the shadow of the branches, and within the verge of the forest, covered from observation, yet with the power of surveying the front of the Lodge, and all the open ground before it, the supposed Louis Kerneguy meditated on his escape.

"What an infliction—to fence with a gouty old man, who knows not, I daresay, a trick of the sword, which was not familiar in the days of old Vincent Saviolo! or, as a change of misery, to hear him read one of those wildernesses of scenes which the English call a play, from prologue to epilogue—from Enter the first to the final *Exeunt omnes*—an unparalleled horror —a penance which would have made a dungeon darker, and added dulness even to Woodstock!"

Here he stopped and looked around, then continued his meditations—"So then, it was here that the gay old Norman secluded his pretty mistress—I warrant, without having seen her, that Rosamond Clifford was never half so handsome as that lovely Alice Lee. And

what a soul there is in the girl's eye!—with what abandonment of all respects, save that expressing the interest of the moment, she poured forth her tide of enthusiasm! Were I to be long here, in spite of prudence, and half-a-dozen very venerable obstacles beside, I should be tempted to try to reconcile her to the indifferent visage of this same hard-favoured Prince.—Hard-favoured?—it is a kind of treason for one who pretends to so much loyalty, to say so of the King's features, and in my mind deserves punishment. Ah, pretty Mistress Alice! many a Mistress Alice before you has made dreadful exclamations on the irregularities of mankind, and the wickedness of the age, and ended by being glad to look out for apologies for their own share in them. But then her father—the stout old cavalier—my father's old friend—should such a thing befall, it would break his heart.—Break a pudding's-end—he has more sense. If I give his grandson a title to quarter the arms of England, what matter if a bar sinister is drawn across them?—Pshaw! far from an abatement, it is a point of addition—the heralds in their next visitation will place him higher in the roll for it. Then, if he did wince a little at first, does not the old traitor deserve it;—first for his disloyal intention of punching mine anointed body black and blue with his vile foils—and secondly, his atrocious complot with Will Shakspeare, a fellow as much out of date as himself, to read me to death with five acts of a historical play, or chronicle, 'being the piteous Life and Death of Richard the Second?' Odds-fish, my own

life is piteous enough, as I think; and my death may match it, for aught I see coming yet. Ah, but then the brother—my friend—my guide—my guard—So far as this little proposed intrigue concerns him, such practising would be thought not quite fair. But your bouncing, swaggering revengeful brothers exist only on the theatre. Your dire revenge, with which a brother persecuted a poor fellow who had seduced his sister, or been seduced by her, as the case might be, as relentlessly as if he had trodden on his toes without making an apology, is entirely out of fashion, since Dorset killed the Lord Bruce many a long year since.* Pshaw! when a King is the offender, the bravest man sacrifices nothing by pocketing a little wrong which he cannot personally resent. And in France, there is not a noble house, where each individual would not cock his hat an inch higher, if they could boast of such a left-handed alliance with the Grand Monarque."

Such were the thoughts which rushed through the mind of Charles, at his first quitting the Lodge of Woodstock, and plunging into the forest that surrounded it. His profligate logic, however, was not the result of his natural disposition, nor received without scruple by his sound understanding. It was a train of reasoning which he had been led to adopt from his too close intimacy with the witty and profligate youth of quality by whom he had been surrounded. It arose from the

* This melancholy story may be found in the *Guardian*. An intrigue of Lord Sackville, afterwards Earl of Dorset, was the cause of the fatal duel.

evil communication with Villiers, Wilmont, Sedley, and others, whose genius was destined to corrupt that age, and the Monarch on whom its character afterwards came so much to depend. Such men, bred amidst the license of civil war, and without experiencing that curb which in ordinary times the authority of parents and relations imposes upon the headlong passions of youth, were practised in every species of vice, and could recommend it as well by precept as by example, turning into pitiless ridicule all those nobler feelings which withhold men from gratifying lawless passion. The events of the King's life had also favoured his reception of this Epicurean doctrine. He saw himself, with the highest claims to sympathy and assistance, coldly treated by the Courts which he visited, rather as a permitted suppliant, than an exiled Monarch. He beheld his own rights and claims treated with scorn and indifference; and, in the same proportion, he was reconciled to the hardhearted and selfish course of dissipation, which promised him immediate indulgence. If this was obtained at the expense of the happiness of others, should he of all men be scrupulous upon the subject, since he treated others only as the world treated him?

But although the foundations of this unhappy system had been laid, the Prince was not at this early period so fully devoted to it as he was found to have become, when a door was unexpectedly opened for his restoration. On the contrary, though the train of gay reasoning which we have above stated, as if it had found vent in uttered language, did certainly arise in his mind, as

that which would have been suggested by his favourite counsellors on such occasions, he recollected that what might be passed over as a peccadillo in France or the Netherlands, or turned into a diverting novel or pasquinade by the wits of his own wandering Court, was likely to have the aspect of horrid ingratitude and infamous treachery among the English gentry, and would inflict a deep, perhaps an incurable wound upon his interest, among the more aged and respectable part of his adherents. Then it occurred to him—for his own interest did not escape him, even in this mode of considering the subject—that he was in the power of the Lees, father and son, who were always understood to be at least sufficiently punctilious on the score of honour; and if they should suspect such an affront as his imagination had conceived, they could be at no loss to find means of the most ample revenge, either by their own hands, or by those of the ruling faction.

"The risk of reopening the fatal window at Whitehall, and renewing the tragedy of the Man in the Mask, were a worse penalty," was his final reflection, "than the old stool of the Scottish penance; and pretty though Alice Lee is, I cannot afford to intrigue at such a hazard. So, farewell, pretty maiden! unless, as sometimes has happened, thou hast a humour to throw thyself at thy King's feet, and then I am too magnanimous to refuse thee my protection. Yet, when I think of the pale clay-cold figure of the old man, as he lay last night extended before me, and imagine the fury of Albert Lee raging with impatience, his hand on a

sword which only his loyalty prevents him from plunging into his sovereign's heart,—nay, the picture is too horrible! Charles must for ever change his name to Joseph, even if he were strongly tempted; which may Fortune in mercy prohibit!"

To speak the truth of a Prince, more unfortunate in his early companions, and the callousness which he acquired by his juvenile adventures and irregular mode of life, than in his natural disposition, Charles came the more readily to this wise conclusion, because he was by no means subject to those violent and engrossing passions, to gratify which, the world has been thought well lost. His amours, like many of the present day, were rather matters of habit and fashion, than of passion and affection; and, in comparing himself in this respect to his grandfather Henry IV., he did neither his ancestor nor himself perfect justice. He was, to parody the words of a bard, himself actuated by the stormy passions which an intriguer often only simulates,—

> None of those who loved so kindly,
> None of those who loved so blindly.

An amour was with him a matter of amusement, a regular consequence, as it seemed to him, of the ordinary course of things in society. He was not at the trouble to practise seductive arts, because he had seldom found occasion to make use of them; his high rank, and the profligacy of part of the female society with which he had mingled, rendering them unnecessary. Added to this, he had, for the same reason, seldom been crossed by the obstinate interference of relations, or even of

husbands, who had generally seemed not unwilling to suffer such matters to take their course.

So that, notwithstanding his total looseness of principle, and systematic disbelief in the virtue of women and the honour of men, as connected with the character of their female relatives, Charles was not a person to have studiously introduced disgrace into a family, where a conquest might have been violently disputed, attained with difficulty, and accompanied with general distress, not to mention the excitation of all fiercer passions against the author of the scandal.

But the danger of the King's society consisted in his being much of an unbeliever in the existence of such cases as were likely to be embittered by remorse on the part of the principal victim, or rendered perilous by the violent resentment of her connexions or relatives. He had even already found such things treated on the continent as matters of ordinary occurrence, subject, in all cases where a man of high influence was concerned, to an easy arrangement; and he was really, generally speaking, sceptical on the subject of severe virtue in either sex, and apt to consider it as a veil assumed by prudery in women, and hypocrisy in men, to extort a higher reward for their compliance.

While we are discussing the character of his disposition to gallantry, the Wanderer was conducted by the walk he had chosen, through several whimsical turns, until at last it brought him under the windows of Victor Lee's apartment, where he descried Alice watering and arranging some flowers placed on the

Oriel window, which was easily accessible by daylight, although at night he had found it a dangerous attempt to scale it. But not Alice only, her father also shewed himself near the window and beckoned him up. The family party seemed now more promising than before, and the fugitive Prince was weary of playing battledore and shuttlecock with his conscience, and much disposed to let matters go as chance should determine.

He climbed lightly up the broken ascent, and was readily welcomed by the old knight who held activity in high honour. Alice also seemed glad to see the lively and interesting young man; and by her presence, and the unaffected mirth with which she enjoyed his sallies, he was animated to display those qualities of wit and humour, which nobody possessed in a higher degree.

His satire delighted the old gentleman, who laughed till his eyes ran over as he heard the youth, whose claims to his respect he little dreamed of, amusing him with successive imitations of the Scottish Presbyterian clergyman, of the proud and poor Hidalgo of the North, of the fierce and overweening pride and Celtic dialect of the mountain chief, of the slow and more pedantic Lowlander, with all of which his residence in Scotland had made him familiar. Alice also laughed and applauded, amused herself, and delighted to see that her father was so; and the whole party were in the highest glee, when Albert Lee entered, eager to find Louis Kerneguy, and to lead him away to a private colloquy with Doctor Rochecliffe, whose zeal, assiduity, and wonderful posses-

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sion of information had constituted him their master-pilot in those difficult times.

It is unnecessary to introduce the reader to the minute particulars of their conference. The information obtained was so far favourable, that the enemy seemed to have had no intelligence of the King's route towards the south, and remained persuaded that he had made his escape from Bristol, as had been reported, and as had indeed been proposed; but the master of the vessel prepared for the King's passage had taken the alarm, and sailed without his royal freight. His departure, however, and the suspicion of the service in which he was engaged, served to make the belief general, that the King had gone off along with him.

But though this was cheering, the Doctor had more unpleasant tidings from the sea-coast, alleging great difficulties in securing a vessel, to which it might be fit to commit a charge so precious; and, above all, requesting his Majesty might on no account venture to approach the shore, until he should receive advice that all the previous arrangements had been completely settled.

No one was able to suggest a safer place of residence than that which he at present occupied. Colonel Everard was deemed certainly not personally unfriendly to the King; and Cromwell, as was supposed, reposed in Everard an unbounded confidence. The interior presented numberless hiding places, and secret modes of exit, known to no one but the ancient residents of the Lodge—nay, far better to Rochecliffe than to any of them; as, when Rector at the neighbouring town, his

prying disposition as an antiquary had induced him to make very many researches among the old ruins—the results of which he was believed, in some instances, to have kept to himself.

To balance these conveniences, it was no doubt true, that the Parliamentary Commissioners were still at no great distance, and would be ready to resume their authority upon the first opportunity. But no one supposed such an opportunity was likely to occur; and all believed, as the influence of Cromwell and the army grew more and more predominant, that the disappointed Commissioners would attempt nothing in contradiction to his pleasure, but wait with patience an indemnification in some other quarter for their vacated commissions. Report, through the voice of Master Joseph Tomkins, stated, that they had determined, in the first place, to retire to Oxford, and were making preparations accordingly. This promised still farther to insure the security of Woodstock. It was therefore settled, that the King, under the character of Louis Kerneguy, should remain an inmate of the Lodge, until a vessel should be procured for his escape, at the port which might be esteemed the safest and most convenient.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FOURTH.

The deadliest snakes are those which, twined 'mongst flowers,
Blend their bright colouring with the varied blossoms,
Their fierce eyes glittering like the spangled dewdrop;
In all so like what nature has most harmless,
That sportive innocence, which dreads no danger,
Is poisoned unawares.

OLD PLAY.

CHARLES (we must now give him his own name) was easily reconciled to the circumstances which rendered his residence at Woodstock advisable. No doubt he

would much rather have secured his safety by making an immediate escape out of England; but he had been condemned already to many uncomfortable lurking-places, and more disagreeable disguises, as well as to long and difficult journeys, during which, between pragmatical officers of justice belonging to the prevailing party, and parties of soldiers whose officers usually took on them to act on their own warrant, risk of discovery had more than once become very imminent. He was glad, therefore, of comparative repose, and of comparative safety.

Then it must be considered, that Charles had been entirely reconciled to the society at Woodstock since he had become better acquainted with it. He had seen, that, to interest the beautiful Alice, and procure a great deal of her company, nothing more was necessary than to submit to the humours, and cultivate the intimacy, of the old cavalier her father. A few bouts at fencing, in which Charles took care not to put out his more perfect skill, and full youthful strength and activity—the endurance of a few scenes from Shakspeare, which the knight read with more zeal than taste—a little skill in music, in which the old man had been a proficient—the deference paid to a few old-fashioned opinions, at which Charles laughed in his sleeve—were all-sufficient to gain for the disguised Prince an interest in Sir Henry Lee, and to conciliate in an equal degree the good-will of his lovely daughter.

Never were there two young persons who could be said to commence this species of intimacy with such

unequal advantages. Charles was a libertine, who, if he did not in cold blood resolve upon prosecuting his passion for Alice to a dishonourable conclusion, was at every moment liable to be provoked to attempt the strength of a virtue, in which he was no believer. Then Alice, on her part, hardly knew even what was implied by the word libertine or seducer. Her mother had died early in the commencement of the civil war, and she had been bred up chiefly with her brother and cousin; so that she had an unfearing and unsuspicious frankness of manner, upon which Charles was not unwilling or unlikely to put a construction favourable to his own views. Even Alice's love for her cousin—the first sensation which awakens the most innocent and simple mind to feelings of shyness and restraint towards the male sex in general—had failed to excite such an alarm in *her* bosom. They were nearly related; and Everard, though young, was several years her elder, and had, from her infancy, been an object of her respect as well as of her affection. When this early and childish intimacy ripened into youthful love, confessed and returned, still it differed in some shades from the passion existing between lovers originally strangers to each other, until their affections have been united in the ordinary course of courtship. Their love was fonder, more familiar, more perfectly confidential; purer too, perhaps, and more free from starts of passionate violence, or apprehensive jealousy.

The possibility that any one could have attempted to rival Everard in her affection, was a circumstance

which never occurred to Alice; and that this singular Scottish lad, whom she laughed with on account of his humour, and laughed at for his peculiarities, should be an object of danger or of caution, never once entered her imagination. The sort of intimacy to which she admitted Kerneguy was the same to which she would have received a companion of her own sex, whose manners she did not always approve, but whose society she found always amusing.

It was natural that the freedom of Alice Lee's conduct, which arose from the most perfect indifference, should pass for something approaching to encouragement in the royal gallant's apprehension, and that any resolutions he had formed against being tempted to violate the hospitality of Woodstock, should begin to totter, as opportunities for doing so became more frequent.

These opportunities were favoured by Albert's departure from Woodstock the very day after his arrival. It had been agreed in full council with Charles and Rochecliffe, that he should go to visit his uncle Everard in the county of Kent, and, by shewing himself there, obviate any cause of suspicion which might arise from his residence at Woodstock, and remove any pretext for disturbing his father's family on account of their harbouring one who had been so lately in arms. He had also undertaken, at his own great personal risk, to visit different points on the sea-coast, and ascertain the security of different places for providing shipping for the King's leaving England.

These circumstances were alike calculated to procure the King's safety, and facilitate his escape. But Alice was thereby deprived of the presence of her brother, who would have been her most watchful guardian, but who had set down the King's light talk upon a former occasion to the gaiety of his humour, and would have thought he had done his sovereign great injustice, had he seriously suspected him of such a breach of hospitality as a dishonourable pursuit of Alice would have implied.

There were, however, two of the household at Woodstock, who appeared not so entirely reconciled with Louis Kerneguy or his purposes. The one was Bevis, who seemed, from their first unfriendly rencontre, to have kept up a pique against their new guest, which no advances on the part of Charles were able to soften. If the page was by chance left alone with his young mistress, Bevis chose always to be of the party; came close by Alice's chair, and growled audibly when the gallant drew near her. "It is a pity," said the disguised prince, "that your Bevis is not a bull-dog, that we might dub him a roundhead at once—He is too handsome, too noble, too aristocratic, to nourish those inhospitable prejudices against a poor houseless cavalier. I am convinced the spirit of Pym or Hampden has transmigrated into the rogue, and continues to demonstrate his hatred against royalty and all its adherents.

Alice would then reply, that Bevis was loyal in word and deed, and only partook her father's prejudices against the Scots, which, she could not but acknowledge, were tolerably strong.

"Nay, then," said the supposed Louis, "I must find some other reason, for I cannot allow Sir Bevis's resentment to rest upon national antipathy. So we will suppose that some gallant cavalier, who wended to the wars and never returned, has adopted his shape to look back upon the haunts he left so unwillingly, and is jealous at seeing even poor Louis Kerneguy drawing near to the lady of his lost affections."—He approached her chair as he spoke, and Bevis gave one of his deep growls.

"In that case, you had best keep your distance," said Alice, laughing, "for the bite of a dog possessed by the ghost of a jealous lover, cannot be very safe." And the King carried on the dialogue in the same strain—which, while it led Alice to apprehend nothing more serious than the apish gallantry of a fantastic boy, certainly induced the supposed Louis Kerneguy to think that he had made one of those conquests which often and easily fall to the share of sovereigns. Notwithstanding the acuteness of his apprehension, he was not sufficiently aware that the Royal Road to female favour is only open to monarchs when they travel in grand costume, and that when they woo incognito, their path of courtship is liable to the same windings and obstacles which obstruct the course of private individuals.

There was, besides Bevis, another member of the family, who kept a look-out upon Lewis Kerneguy, and with no friendly eye. Phœbe Mayflower, though her experience extended not beyond the sphere of the village, yet knew the world much better than her mistress, and besides she was five years older. More

knowing, she was more suspicious. She thought that odd-looking Scotch boy made more up to her young mistress than was proper for his condition of life; and, moreover, that Alice gave him a little more encouragement than Parthenia would have afforded to any such Jack-a-dandy, in the absence of Argalus—for the volume treating of the loves of these celebrated Arcadians was then the favourite study of swains and damsels throughout merry England. Entertaining such suspicions, Phœbe was at a loss how to conduct herself on the occasion, and yet resolved she would not see the slightest chance of the course of Colonel Everard's true love being obstructed, without attempting a remedy. She had a peculiar favour for Markham herself; and, moreover, he was, according to her phrase, as handsome and personable a young man as was in Oxfordshire; and this Scottish scarecrow was no more to be compared to him than chalk was to cheese. And yet she allowed that Master Girnigy had a wonderfully well-oiled tongue, and that such gallants were not to be despised. What was to be done?—she had no facts to offer, only vague suspicion; and was afraid to speak to her mistress, whose kindness, great as it was, did not, nevertheless, encourage familiarity.

She sounded Joceline; but he was, she knew not why, so deeply interested about this unlucky lad, and held his importance so high, that she could make no impression on him. To speak to the old knight, would have been to raise a general tempest. The worthy chaplain, who was, at Woodstock, grand referee

on all disputed matters, would have been the damsel's most natural resource, for he was peaceful as well as moral by profession, and politic by practice. But it happened he had given Phœbe unintentional offence by speaking of her under the classical epithet of *Rustica Fidele*, the which epithet, as she understood it not, she held herself bound to resent as contumelious, and declaring she was not fonder of a *fiddle* than other folk, had ever since shunned all intercourse with Doctor Rochecliffe which she could easily avoid.

Master Tomkins was always coming and going about the house under various pretexts; but he was a round-head, and she was too true to the cavaliers to introduce any of the enemy as parties to their internal discords; besides, he had talked to Phœbe herself in a manner which induced her to decline everything in the shape of familiarity with him. Lastly, Cavaliero Wildrake might have been consulted; but Phœbe had her own reasons for saying, as she did with some emphasis, that Cavaliero Wildrake was an impudent London rake. At length she resolved to communicate her suspicions to the party having most interest in verifying or confuting them.

"I'll let Master Markham Everard know, that there is a wasp buzzing about his honey-comb," said Phœbe; "and, moreover, that I know that this young Scotch Scapegrace shifted himself out of a woman's into a man's dress at Goody Green's, and gave Goody Green's Dolly a gold-piece to say nothing about it; and no more she did to any one but me, and she knows best

herself whether she gave change for the gold or not—but Master Louis is a saucy jackanapes, and like enough to ask it."

Three or four days elapsed while matters continued in this condition—the disguised Prince sometimes thinking on the intrigue which Fortune seemed to have thrown in his way for his amusement, and taking advantage of such opportunities as occurred to increase his intimacy with Alice Lee; but much oftener harassing Doctor Rochecliffe with questions about the possibility of escape, which the good man finding himself unable to answer, secured his leisure against royal importunity, by retreating into the various unexplored recesses of the Lodge, known perhaps only to himself, who had been for nearly a score of years employed in writing the Wonders of Woodstock.

It chanced on the fourth day, that some trifling circumstance had called the knight abroad; and he had left the young Scotsman, now familiar in the family, along with Alice, in the parlour of Victor Lee. Thus situated, he thought the time not unpropitious for entering upon a strain of gallantry, of a kind which might be called experimental, such as is practised by the Croats in skirmishing, when they keep bridle in hand, ready to attack the enemy, or canter off without coming to close quarters, as circumstances may recommend. After using for nearly ten minutes a sort of metaphysical jargon, which might, according to Alice's pleasure, have been interpreted either into gallantry, or the language of serious pretension, and when he sup-

posed her engaged in fathoming his meaning, he had the mortification to find, by a single and brief question, that he had been totally unattended to, and that Alice was thinking on anything at the moment rather than the sense of what he had been saying. She asked him if he could tell what it was o'clock, and this with an air of real curiosity concerning the lapse of time, which put coquetry wholly out of the question.

"I will go look at the sundial, Mistress Alice," said the gallant, rising and colouring, through a sense of the contempt with which he thought himself treated.

"You will do me a pleasure, Master Kerneguy," said Alice, without the least consciousness of the indignation she had excited.

Master Louis Kerneguy left the room accordingly, not, however, to procure the information required, but to vent his anger and mortification, and to swear, with more serious purpose than he had dared to do before, that Alice should rue her insolence. Good-natured as he was, he was still a prince, unaccustomed to contradiction, far less to contempt, and his self-pride felt, for the moment, wounded to the quick. With a hasty step he plunged into the Chase, only remembering his own safety so far as to choose the deeper and sequestered avenues, where, walking on with the speedy and active step, which his recovery from fatigue now permitted him to exercise according to his wont, he solaced his angry purposes by devising schemes of revenge on the insolent country coquette, from which

no consideration of hospitality was in future to have weight enough to save her.

The irritated gallant passed

The dial-stone, aged and green.

without deigning to ask it a single question; nor could it have satisfied his curiosity if he had, for no sun happened to shine at the moment. He then hastened forward, muffling himself in his cloak, and assuming a stooping and slouching gait, which diminished his apparent height. He was soon involved in the deep and dim alleys of the wood, into which he had insensibly plunged himself, and was traversing it at a great rate, without having any distinct idea in what direction he was going, when suddenly his course was arrested, first by a loud hollo, and then by a summons to stand, accompanied by what seemed still more startling and extraordinary, the touch of a cane upon his shoulder, imposed in a good-humoured but somewhat imperious manner.

There were few symptoms of recognition which would have been welcome at this moment; but the appearance of the person who had thus arrested his course, was least of all that he could have anticipated as timely or agreeable. When he turned, on receiving the signal, he beheld himself close to a young man, nearly six feet in height, well made in joint and limb, but the gravity of whose apparel, although handsome and gentlemanlike, and a sort of precision in his habit, from the cleanness and stiffness of his band to the unsullied purity of his Spanish-leather shoes, bespoke

a love of order which was foreign to the impoverished and vanquished cavaliers, and proper to the habits of those of the victorious party, who could afford to dress themselves handsomely; and whose rule—that is, such as regarded the higher and more respectable classes—enjoined decency and sobriety of garb and deportment. There was yet another weight against the Prince in the scale, and one still more characteristic of the inequality in the comparison under which he seemed to labour. There was strength in the muscular form of the stranger who had brought him to this involuntary parley, authority and determination in his brow, a long rapier on the left, and a poniard or dagger on the right side of his belt, and a pair of pistols stuck into it, which would have been sufficient to give the unknown the advantage (Louis Kerneguy having no weapon but his sword), even had his personal strength approached nearer than it did to that of the person by whom he was thus suddenly stopped.

Bitterly regretting the thoughtless fit of passion that brought him into his present situation, but especially the want of the pistols he had left behind, and which do so much to place bodily strength and weakness upon an equal footing, Charles yet availed himself of the courage and presence of mind, in which few of his unfortunate family had for centuries been deficient. He stood firm and without motion, his cloak still wrapped round the lower part of his face, to give time for explanation, in case he was mistaken for some other person.

This coolness produced its effect; for the other party said, with doubt and surprise on his part, "Joceline Joliffe, is it not?—if I know not Joceline Joliffe, I should at least know my own cloak."

"I am not Joceline Joliffe, as you may see, sir," said Kerneguy, calmly, drawing himself erect to shew the difference of size, and dropping the cloak from his face and person.

"Indeed!" replied the stranger, in surprise; "then, Sir Unknown, I have to express my regret at having used my cane in intimating that I wished you to stop. From that dress, which I certainly recognize for my own, I concluded you must be Joceline, in whose custody I had left my habit at the Lodge."

"If it had been Joceline, sir," replied the supposed Kerneguy, with perfect composure, "methinks you should not have struck so hard."

The other party was obviously confused by the steady calmness with which he was encountered. The sense of politeness dictated, in the first place, an apology for a mistake, when he thought he had been tolerably certain of the person. Master Kerneguy was not in a situation to be punctilious; he bowed gravely as indicating his acceptance of the excuse offered, then turned, and walked, as he conceived, towards the Lodge; though he had traversed the woods which were cut with various alleys in different directions, too hastily to be certain of the real course which he wished to pursue.

He was much embarrassed to find that this did not get him rid of the companion whom he had thus in-

voluntarily acquired. Walked he slow, walked he fast, his friend in the genteel but puritanic habit, strong in person, and well armed, as we have described him, seemed determined to keep him company, and, without attempting to join, or enter into conversation, never suffered him to outstrip his surveillance for more than two or three yards. The Wanderer mended his pace; but, although he was then, in his youth, as afterwards in his riper age, one of the best walkers in Britain, the stranger, without advancing his pace to a run, kept fully equal to him, and his persecution became so close and constant, and inevitable, that the pride and fear of Charles were both alarmed, and he began to think that, whatever the danger might be of a single-handed rencontre, he would nevertheless have a better bargain of this tall satellite if they settled the debate betwixt them in the forest, than if they drew near any place of habitation, where the man in authority was likely to find friends and concurrents.

Betwixt anxiety, therefore, vexation, and anger, Charles faced suddenly round on his pursuer, as they reached a small narrow glade, which led to the little meadow over which presided the King's Oak, the ragged and scathed branches and gigantic trunk of which formed a vista to the little wild avenue.

"Sir," said he to his pursuer, "you have already been guilty of one piece of impertinence towards me. You have apologized; and knowing no reason why you should distinguish me as an object of incivility, I have accepted your excuse without scruple. Is there anything

remains to be settled betwixt us, which causes you to follow me in this manner? If so, I shall be glad to make it a subject of explanation or satisfaction, as the case may admit of. I think you can owe me no malice; for I never saw you before to my knowledge. If you can give any good reason for asking it, I am willing to render you personal satisfaction. If your purpose is merely impertinent curiosity, I let you know that I will not suffer myself to be dogged in my private walks by any one."

"When I recognise my own cloak on another man's shoulders," replied the stranger dryly, "methinks I have a natural right to follow, and see what becomes of it; for know, sir, though I have been mistaken as to the wearer, yet I am confident I had as good a right to stretch my cane across the cloak you are muffled in, as ever had any one to brush his own garments. If, therefore, we are to be friends, I must ask, for instance, how you came by that cloak, and where you are going with it? I shall otherwise make bold to stop you, as one who has sufficient commission to do so."

"Oh, unhappy cloak," thought the Wanderer, "ay, and thrice unhappy the idle fancy that sent me here with it wrapped around my nose, to pick quarrels and attract observation, when quiet and secrecy were peculiarly essential to my safety!"

"If you will allow me to guess, sir," continued the stranger, who was no other than Markham Everard, "I will convince you, that you are better known than you think for."

"Now, Heaven forbid!" prayed the party addressed, in silence, but with as much devotion as ever he applied to a prayer in his life. Yet even in this moment of extreme urgency, his courage and composure did not fail; and he recollected it was of the utmost importance not to seem startled, and to answer so as, if possible, to lead the dangerous companion with whom he had met, to confess the extent of his actual knowledge or suspicions concerning him.

"If you know me, sir," he said, "and are a gentleman, as your appearance promises, you cannot be at a loss to discover to what accident you must attribute my wearing these clothes, which you say are yours."

"Oh, sir," replied Colonel Everard, his wrath in no sort turned away by the mildness of the stranger's answer, "we have learned our Ovid's Metamorphoses, and we know for what purposes young men of quality travel in disguise—we know that even female attire is resorted to on certain occasions—We have heard of Vertumnus and Pomona."

The Monarch, as he weighed these words, again uttered a devout prayer, that this ill-looking affair might have no deeper root than the jealousy of some admirer of Alice Lee, promising to himself, that, devotee as he was to the fair sex, he would make no scruple of renouncing the fairest of Eve's daughters in order to get out of the present dilemma.

"Sir," he said, "you seem to be a gentleman, I have no objection to tell you as such, that I also am of that class."

"Or somewhat higher perhaps?" said Everard.

"A gentleman," replied Charles, "is a term which comprehends all ranks entitled to armorial bearings—A duke, a lord, a prince, is no more than a gentleman; and if in misfortune, as I am, he may be glad if that general term of courtesy is allowed him."

"Sir," replied Everard, "I have no purpose to entrap you to any acknowledgment fatal to your own safety,—nor do I hold it my business to be active in the arrest of private individuals, whose perverted sense of national duty may have led them into errors, rather to be pitied than punished by candid men. But if those who have brought civil war and disturbance into their native country, proceed to carry dishonour and disgrace into the bosom of families—if they attempt to carry on their private debaucheries to the injury of the hospitable roofs which afford them refuge from the consequences of their public crimes, do you think, my lord, that we shall bear it with patience?"

"If it is your purpose to quarrel with me," said the Prince, "speak it out at once like a gentleman. You have the advantage, no doubt, of arms, but it is not that odds which will induce me to fly from a single man. If, on the other hand, you are disposed to hear reason, I tell you in calm words, that I neither suspect the offence to which you allude, nor comprehend why you give me the title of my lord."

"You deny, then, being the Lord Wilmot?" said Everard.

"I may do so most safely," said the Prince.

"Perhaps you rather style yourself Earl of Rochester? We heard that the issuing of some such patent by the King of Scots was a step which your ambition proposed."

"Neither lord nor earl am I, as sure as I have a Christian soul to be saved. My name is——"

"Do not degrade yourself by unnecessary falsehood, my lord; and that to a single man, who, I promise you, will not invoke public justice to assist his own good sword should he see cause to use it. Can you look at that ring, and deny that you are Lord Wilmot?"

He handed to the disguised Prince a ring which he took from his purse, and his opponent instantly knew it for the same he had dropped into Alice's pitcher at the fountain, obeying only, though imprudently, the gallantry of the moment, in giving a pretty gem to a handsome girl, whom he had accidentally frightened.

"I know the ring," he said; "it has been in my possession. How it should prove me to be Lord Wilmot, I cannot conceive; and beg to say, it bears false witness against me."

"You shall see the evidence," answered Everard; and resuming the ring, he pressed a spring ingeniously contrived in the collet of the setting, on which the stone flew back, and shewed within it the cipher of Lord Wilmot beautifully engraved in miniature, with a coronet—"What say you now, sir?"

"That probabilities are no proofs," said the Prince; "there is nothing here save what can be easily accounted for. I am the son of a Scottish nobleman, who was

mortally wounded and made prisoner at Worcester fight. When he took leave, and bid me fly, he gave me the few valuables he possessed, and that among others. I have heard him talk of having changed rings with Lord Wilmot, on some occasion in Scotland, but I never knew the trick of the gem which you have shewn me."

In this it may be necessary to say, Charles spoke very truly; nor would he have parted with it in the way he did, had he suspected it would be easily recognised. He proceeded after a minute's pause:—"Once more, sir,—I have told you much that concerns my safety—if you are generous, you will let me pass, and I may do you on some future day as good service. If you mean to arrest me, you must do so here, and at your own peril, for I will neither walk farther your way, nor permit you to dog me on mine. If you let me pass, I will thank you—if not, take to your weapon."

"Young gentleman," said Colonel Everard "whether you be actually the gay young nobleman for whom I took you, you have made me uncertain; but, intimate as you say your family has been with him, I have little doubt that you are proficient in the school of debauchery, of which Wilmot and Villiers are professors, and their hopeful Master a graduated student. Your conduct at Woodstock, where you have rewarded the hospitality of the family by meditating the most deadly wound to their honour, has proved you too apt a scholar in such an academy. I intended only to warn you on this

subject—it will be your own fault if I add chastisement to admonition."

"Warn me, sir?" said the Prince, indignantly, "and chastisement! This is presuming more on my patience than is consistent with your own safety—Draw, sir."—So saying, he laid his hand on his sword.

"My religion," said Everard, "forbids me to be rash in shedding blood—Go home, sir—be wise—consult the dictates of honour as well as prudence. Respect the honour of the House of Lee, and know there is one nearly allied to it, by whom your motions will be called to severe account."

"Aha!" said the Prince, with a bitter laugh, "I see the whole matter now—we have our roundheaded Colonel, our puritan cousin, before us—the man of texts and morals, whom Alice Lee laughs at so heartily. If your religion, sir, prevents you from giving satisfaction, it should prevent you from offering insult to a person of honour."

The passions of both were now fully up—they drew mutually, and began to fight, the Colonel relinquishing the advantage he could have obtained by the use of his fire-arms. A thrust of the arm, or a slip of the foot, might, at the moment, have changed the destinies of Britain, when the arrival of a third party broke off the combat.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIFTH.

Stay—for the King has thrown his warder down.
RICHARD II.

THE combatants whom we left engaged at the end of the last chapter, made mutual passes at each other with apparently equal skill and courage. Charles had been too often in action, and too long a party as well as a victim to civil war, to find anything new or surprising in being obliged to defend himself with his own hands; and Everard had been distinguished, as well for his personal bravery, as for the other properties of a commander. But the arrival of a third party prevented

the tragic conclusion of a combat, in which the success of either party must have given him much cause for regretting his victory.

It was the old knight himself, who arrived, mounted upon a forest pony, for the war and sequestration had left him no steed of a more dignified description. He thrust himself between the combatants, and commanded them on their lives to hold. So soon as a glance from one to the other had ascertained to him whom he had to deal with, he demanded, "Whether the devils of Woodstock whom folk talked about had got possession of them both, that they were tilting at each other within the verge of the royal liberties?—Let me tell both of you," he said, "that while old Henry Lee is at Woodstock, the immunities of the Park shall be maintained as much as if the King were still on the throne. None shall fight duellos here, excepting the stags in their season. Put up, both of you, or I shall lug out as thirdsman, and prove perhaps the worst devil of the three!—As Will says—

> I'll so maul you and your toasting-irons,
> That you shall think the devil has come from hell."

The combatants desisted from their encounter, but stood looking at each other sullenly, as men do in such a situation, each unwilling to seem to desire peace more than the other, and averse therefore to be the first to sheathe his sword.

"Return your weapons, gentlemen, upon the spot," said the knight yet more peremptorily, "one and both

of you, or you will have something to do with me, I promise you. You may be thankful times are changed. I have known them such, that your insolence might have cost each of you your right hand, if not redeemed with a round sum of money. Nephew, if you do not mean to alienate me for ever, I command you to put up.—Master Kerneguy, you are my guest. I request of you not to do me the insult of remaining with your sword drawn, where it is my duty to see peace observed."

"I obey you, Sir Henry," said the King, sheathing his rapier—"I hardly indeed know wherefore I was assaulted by this gentleman. I assure you, none respects the King's person or privileges more than myself—though the devotion is somewhat out of fashion."

"We may find a place to meet, sir," replied Everard, "where neither the royal person nor privileges can be offended."

"Faith, very hardly, sir," said Charles, unable to suppress the rising jest—"I mean, the King has so few followers, that the loss of the least of them might be some small damage to him; but, risking all that, I will meet you wherever there is fair field for a poor cavalier to get off in safety, if he has the luck in fight."

Sir Henry Lee's first idea had been fixed upon the insult offered to the royal demesne; he now began to turn them towards the safety of his kinsman, and of the young royalist, as he deemed him. "Gentlemen," he said, "I must insist on this business being put to a final end. Nephew Markham, is this your return for my condescension in coming back to Woodstock on

your warrant, that you should take an opportunity to cut the throat of my guest?"

"If you knew his purpose as well as I do,"—said Markham, and then paused, conscious that he might only incense his uncle without convincing him, as anything he might say of Kerneguy's addresses to Alice was likely to be imputed to his own jealous suspicions —he looked on the ground, therefore, and was silent.

"And you, Master Kerneguy," said Sir Henry, "can you give me any reason why you seek to take the life of this young man, in whom, though unhappily forgetful of his loyalty and duty, I must yet take some interest, as my nephew by affinity?"

"I was not aware the gentleman enjoyed that honour, which certainly would have protected him from my sword," answered Kerneguy. "But the quarrel is his; nor can I tell any reason why he fixed it upon me, unless it were the difference of our political opinions."

"You know the contrary," said Everard; "you know that I told you you were safe from me as a fugitive royalist—and your last words shewed you were at no loss to guess my connection with Sir Henry. That, indeed, is of little consequence. I should debase myself did I use the relationship as a means of protection from you, or any one."

As they thus disputed, neither choosing to approach the real cause of quarrel, Sir Henry looked from the one to the other, with a peace-making countenance, exclaiming—

——"Why, what an intricate impeach is this?
I think you both have drunk of Circe's cup.

Come, my young masters, allow an old man to mediate between you. I am not short-sighted in such matters —The mother of mischief is no bigger than a gnat's wing; and I have known fifty instances in my own day, when, as Will says—

Gallants have been confronted hardily,
In single opposition, hand to hand,

in which, after the field was fought, no one could remember the cause of quarrel.—Tush! a small thing will do it—the taking of the wall—or the gentle rub of the shoulder in passing each other, or a hasty word, or a misconceived gesture—Come, forget your cause of quarrel, be what it will—you have had your breathing, and though you put up your rapiers unbloodied, that was no default of yours, but by command of your elder, and one who had right to use authority. In Malta, where the duello is punctiliously well understood, the persons engaged in a single combat are bound to halt on the command of a knight, or priest, or lady, and the quarrel so interrupted is held as honourably terminated, and may not be revived.—Nephew, it is, I think, impossible that you can nourish spleen against this young gentleman for having fought for his King. Hear my honest proposal, Markham—You know I bear no malice, though I have some reason to be offended with you—Give the young man your hand in friendship, and we will back to the Lodge,

all three together, and drink a cup of sack in token of reconciliation."

Markham Everard found himself unable to resist this approach towards kindness on his uncle's part. He suspected, indeed, what was partly the truth, that it was not entirely from reviving good will, but also, that his uncle thought, by such attention, to secure his neutrality at least, if not his assistance, for the safety of the fugitive royalist. He was sensible that he was placed in an awkward predicament; and that he might incur the suspicions of his own party, for holding intercourse even with a near relation, who harboured such guests. But, on the other hand, he thought his services to the Commonwealth had been of sufficient importance to outweigh whatever envy might urge on that topic. Indeed, although the Civil War had divided families much, and in many various ways, yet when it seemed ended by the triumph of the republicans, the rage of political hatred began to relent, and the ancient ties of kindred and friendship regained at least a part of their former influence. Many reunions were formed; and those who, like Everard, adhered to the conquering party, often exerted themselves for the protection of their deserted relatives.

As these things rushed through his mind, accompanied with the prospect of a renewed intercourse with Alice Lee, by means of which he might be at hand to protect her against every chance, either of injury or insult, he held out his hand to the supposed Scottish page, saying at the same time, "That, for his part, he

was very ready to forget the cause of quarrel, or rather, to consider it as arising out of a misapprehension, and to offer Master Kerneguy such friendship as might exist between honourable men, who had embraced different sides in politics."

Unable to overcome the feeling of personal dignity, which prudence recommended to him to forget, Louis Kerneguy in return bowed low, but without accepting Everard's proffered hand.

"He had no occasion," he said, "to make any exertions to forget the cause of quarrel, for he had never been able to comprehend it; but as he had not shunned the gentleman's resentment, so he was now willing to embrace and return any degree of his favour, with which he might be pleased to honour him."

Everard withdrew his hand with a smile, and bowed in return to the salutation of the page, whose stiff reception of his advances he imputed to the proud pettish disposition of a Scotch boy, trained up in extravagant ideas of family consequence and personal importance, which his acquaintance with the world had not yet been sufficient to dispel.

Sir Henry Lee, delighted with the termination of the quarrel, which he supposed to be in deep deference to his own authority, and not displeased with the opportunity of renewing some acquaintance with his nephew, who had, notwithstanding his political demerits, a warmer interest in his affections than he was, perhaps, himself aware of, said, in a tone of consolation, "Never be mortified, young gentlemen. I protest it went to

my heart to part you, when I saw you stretching yourselves so handsomely, and in fair love of honour, without any malicious or blood-thirsty thoughts. I promise you, had it not been for my duty as Ranger here, and sworn to the office, I would rather have been your umpire than your hinderance.—But a finished quarrel is a forgotten quarrel; and your tilting should have no further consequence excepting the appetite it may have given you."

So saying, he urged forward his pony, and moved in triumph towards the Lodge by the nearest alley. His feet almost touching the ground, the ball of his toe just resting in the stirrup,—the forepart of the thigh brought round to the saddle,—the heels turned outwards, and sunk as much as possible,—his body precisely erect,—the reins properly and systematically divided in his left hand, his right holding a riding-rod diagonally pointed towards the horse's left ear,—he seemed a champion of the menage, fit to have reined Bucephalus himself. His youthful companions, who attended on either hand like equerries, could scarcely suppress a smile at the completely adjusted and systematic posture of the rider, contrasted with the wild and diminutive appearance of the pony, with its shaggy coat, and long tail and mane, and its keen eyes sparkling like red coals from amongst the mass of hair which fell over its small countenance. If the reader has the Duke of Newcastle's book on horsemanship (*splendida moles!*) he may have some idea of the figure of the good knight, if he can conceive such a figure as one of

the cavaliers there represented, seated in all the graces of his art, on a Welsh or Exmoor pony, in its native savage state, without grooming or discipline of any kind; the ridicule being greatly enhanced by the disproportion of size betwixt the animal and its rider.

Perhaps the knight saw their wonder, for the first words he said after they left the ground were, "Pixie, though small, is mettlesome, gentlemen" (here he contrived that Pixie should himself corroborate the assertion by executing a gambade),—"he is diminutive, but full of spirit;—indeed, save that I am somewhat too large for an elfin horseman" (the knight was upwards of six feet high), "I should remind myself, when I mount him, of the Fairy King, as described by Mike Drayton:—

Himself he on an earwig set,
Yet scarce upon his back could get,
So oft and high he did curvet,
Ere he himself did settle.
He made him stop, and turn, and bound,
To gallop, and to trot the round,
He scarce could stand on any ground,
He was so full of mettle."

"My old friend, Pixie," said Everard, stroking the pony's neck, "I am glad that he has survived all these bustling days—Pixie must be above twenty years old, Sir Henry?"

"Above twenty years, certainly. Yes, nephew Markham, war is a whirlwind in a plantation, which only spares what is least worth leaving. Old Pixie and his old master have survived many a tall fellow,

and many a great horse—neither of them good for much themselves. Yet, as Will says, an old man can do somewhat. So Pixie and I still survive."

So saying, he again contrived that Pixie should shew some remnants of activity.

"Still survive?" said the young Scot, completing the sentence which the good knight had left unfinished —"ay, still survive,

To witch the world with noble horsemanship."

Everard coloured, for he felt the irony; but not so his uncle, whose simple vanity never permitted him to doubt the sincerity of the compliment.

"Are you avised of that?" he said. In King James's time, indeed, I have appeared in the tilt-yard, and there you might have said—

You saw young Harry with his beaver up.

As to seeing *old* Harry, why"——Here the knight paused, and looked as a bashful man in labour of a pun —"As to old Harry—why, you might as well see the *devil*. You take me, Master Kerneguy—the devil, you know, is my namesake—ha—ha—ha!—Cousin Everard, I hope your precision is not startled by an innocent jest?"

He was so delighted with the applause of both his companions, that he recited the whole of the celebrated passage referred to, and concluded with defying the present age, bundle all its wits, Donne, Cowley, Waller, and the rest of them together, to produce a poet of a tenth part of the genius of old Will.

"Why, we are said to have one of his descendants among us—Sir William D'Avenant," said Louis Kerneguy; "and many think him as clever a fellow."

"What!" exclaimed Sir Henry—"Will D'Avenant, whom I knew in the North, an officer under Newcastle, when the Marquis lay before Hull?—why, he was an honest cavalier, and wrote good doggerel enough; but how came he a-kin to Will Shakspeare, I trow?"

"Why," replied the young Scot, "by the surer side of the house, and after the old fashion, if D'Avenant speaks truth. It seems that his mother was a good-looking, laughing, buxom mistress of an inn between Stratford and London, at which Will Shakspeare often quartered as he went down to his native town; and that out of friendship and gossipred, as we say in Scotland, Will Shakspeare became godfather to Will D'Avenant; and not contented with this spiritual affinity, the younger Will is for establishing some claim to a natural one, alleging that his mother was a great admirer of wit, and there were no bounds to her complaisance for men of genius."*

"Out upon the hound!" said Colonel Everard; "would he purchase the reputation of descending from poet, or from prince, at the expense of his mother's good fame?—his nose ought to be slit."

"That would be difficult," answered the disguised

* This gossipping tale is to be found in the variorum Shakspeare. D'Avenant did not much mind throwing out hints, in which he sacrificed his mother's character to his desire of being held a descendant from the admirable Shakspeare.

Prince, recollecting the peculiarity of the bard's countenance.*

"Will D'Avenant the son of Will Shakspeare!" said the knight, who had not yet recovered his surprise at the enormity of the pretension; "why, it reminds me of a verse in the puppetshow of Phæton, where the hero complains to his mother—

> Besides, by all the village boys I am shamed;
> You the Sun's son, you rascal, you be d—d!†

I never heard such unblushing assurance in my life!—Will D'Avenant the son of the brightest and best poet that ever was, is, or will be?—But I crave your pardon, nephew—You, I believe, love no stage plays."

"Nay, I am not altogether so precise as you would make me, uncle. I have loved them perhaps too well in my time, and now I condemn them not altogether, or in gross, though I approve not their excesses and extravagances.—I cannot, even in Shakspeare, but see many things both scandalous to decency and prejudicial to good manners, many things which tend to ridicule virtue, or to recommend vice,—at least to mitigate the hideousness of its features. I cannot think these fine poems are a useful study, and especially for the youth of either sex, in which bloodshed is pointed out as the

* D'Avenant actually wanted the nose, the foundation of many a jest of the day.

† We observe this couplet in Fielding's farce of *Tumbledown-Dick*, founded on the same classical story. As it was current in the time of the Commonwealth, it must have reached the author of *Tom Jones* by tradition—for no one will suspect the present author of making the anachronism.

chief occupation of the men, and intrigue as the sole employment of the women."

In making these observations, Everard was simple enough to think that he was only giving his uncle an opportunity of defending a favourite opinion, without offending him by a contradiction, which was so limited and mitigated. But here, as on other occasions, he forgot how obstinate his uncle was in his views, whether of religion, policy, or taste, and that it would be as easy to convert him to the Presbyterian form of government, or engage him to take the abjuration oath, as to shake his belief in Shakspeare. There was another peculiarity in the good knight's mode of arguing, which Everard, being himself of a plain and downright character, and one whose religious tenets were in some degree unfavourable to the suppressions and simulations often used in society, could never perfectly understand. Sir Henry, sensible of his natural heat of temper, was wont scrupulously to guard against it, and would for some time, when in fact much offended, conduct a debate with all the external appearance of composure, till the violence of his feelings would rise so high as to overcome and bear away the artificial barriers opposed to it, and rush down upon the adversary with accumulating wrath. It thus frequently happened, that, like a wily old general, he retreated in the face of his disputant in good order and by degrees, with so moderate a degree of resistance, as to draw on his antagonist's pursuit to the spot, where, at length, making a sudden and unexpected attack, with horse, foot, and

artillery at once, he seldom failed to confound the enemy, though he might not overthrow him.

It was on this principle, therefore, that, hearing Everard's last observation, he disguised his angry feelings, and answered, with a tone where politeness was called in to keep guard upon passion. "That undoubtedly the Presbyterian gentry had given, through the whole of these unhappy times, such proofs of an humble, unaspiring, and unambitious desire of the public good, as entitled them to general credit for the sincerity of those very strong scruples which they entertained against works, in which the noblest sentiments of religion and virtue,—sentiments which might convert hardened sinners, and be placed with propriety in the mouths of dying saints and martyrs,—happened, from the rudeness and coarse taste of the times, to be mixed with some broad jests, and similar matter, which lay not much in the way, excepting of those who painfully sought such stuff out, that they might use it in villifying what was in itself deserving of the highest applause. But what he wished especially to know from his nephew was, whether any of those gifted men, who had expelled the learned scholars and deep divines of the Church of England from the pulpit, and now flourished in their stead, received any inspiration from the muses (if he might use so profane a term without offence to Colonel Everard), or whether they were not as sottishly and brutally averse from elegant letters, as they were from humanity and common sense?"

Colonel Everard might have guessed, by the ironical

tone in which this speech was delivered, what storm was mustering within his uncle's bosom—nay, he might have conjectured the state of the old knight's feelings from his emphasis on the word Colonel, by which epithet, as that which most connected his nephew with the party he hated, he never distinguished Everard, unless when his wrath was rising; while, on the contrary, when disposed to be on good terms with him, he usually called him Kinsman, or Nephew Markham. Indeed, it was under a partial sense that this was the case, and in the hope to see his cousin Alice, that the Colonel forebore making any answer to the harangue of his uncle, which had concluded just as the old knight had alighted at the door of the Lodge, and was entering the hall, followed by his two attendants.

Phœbe at the same time made her appearance in the hall, and received orders to bring some "beverage" for the gentlemen. The Hebe of Woodstock failed not to recognise and welcome Everard by an almost imperceptible courtesy; but she did not serve her interest, as she designed, when she asked the knight, as a question of course, whether he commanded the attendance of Mistress Alice. A stern *No*, was the decided reply; and the ill-timed interference seemed to increase his previous irritation against Everard for his depreciation of Shakspeare. "I would insist,"—said Sir Henry, resuming the obnoxious subject, "were it fit for a poor disbanded cavalier to use such a phrase towards a commander of the conquering army—upon knowing whether the convulsion which has sent us saints and prophets

without end, has not also afforded us a poet with enough both of gifts and grace to outshine poor old Will, the oracle and idol of us blinded and carnal cavaliers?"

"Surely, sir," replied Colonel Everard, "I know verses written by a friend of the Commonwealth, and those, too, of a dramatic character, which, weighed in an impartial scale, might equal even the poetry of Shakspeare, and which are free from the fustian and indelicacy with which that great bard was sometimes content to feed the coarse appetites of his barbarous audience."

"Indeed!" said the knight, keeping down his wrath with difficulty. "I should like to be acquainted with this master-piece of poetry!—May we ask the name of this distinguished person?"

"It must be Vicars, or Withers at least," said the feigned page.

"No, sir," replied Everard, "nor Drummond of Hawthornden, nor Lord Stirling neither. And yet the verses will vindicate what I say, if you will make allowance for indifferent recitation, for I am better accustomed to speak to a battalion than to those who love the muses. The speaker is a lady benighted, who, having lost her way in a pathless forest, at first expresses herself agitated by the supernatural fears to which her situation gave rise."

"A play, too, and written by a roundhead author!" said Sir Henry, in surprise.

"A dramatic production, at least," replied his nephew; and began to recite simply, but with feeling,

the lines now so well known, but which had then obtained no celebrity, the fame of the author resting upon the basis rather of his polemical and political publications, than on the poetry doomed in after days to support the eternal structure of his immortality.

> "These thoughts may startle, but will not astound
> The virtuous mind, that ever walks attended
> By a strong-siding champion, Conscience."

"My own opinion, nephew Markham, my own opinion," said Sir Henry, with a burst of admiration; "better expressed, but just what I said when the scoundrelly roundheads pretended to see ghosts at Woodstock—Go on, I prithee."

Everard proceeded:—

> "O welcome, pure-eyed Faith, white-handed Hope,
> Thou hovering angel, girt with golden wings,
> And thou unblemished form of Chastity!
> I see ye visibly, and now believe
> That he the Supreme Good, to whom all things ill
> Are but as slavish officers of vengeance,
> Would send a glistering guardian, if need were,
> To keep my life and honour unassailed.—
> Was I deceived, or did a sable cloud,
> Turn forth her silver lining on the night?

"The rest has escaped me," said the reciter; "and I marvel I have been able to remember so much."

Sir Henry Lee, who had expected some effusion very different from those classical and beautiful lines, soon changed the scornful expression of his countenance, relaxed his contorted upper lip, and, stroking down his beard with his left hand, rested the forefinger of the

right upon his eyebrow, in sign of profound attention. After Everard had ceased speaking, the old man sighed as at the end of a strain of sweet music. He then spoke in a gentler manner than formerly.

"Cousin Markham," he said, "these verses flow sweetly, and sound in my ears like the well-touched warbling of a lute. But thou knowest I am something slow of apprehending the full meaning of that which I hear for the first time. Repeat me these verses again, slowly and deliberately; for I always love to hear poetry twice, the first time for sound, and the latter time for sense."

Thus encouraged, Everard recited again the lines with more hardihood and better effect; the knight distinctly understanding, and from his looks and motions highly applauding them.

"Yes!" he broke out, when Everard was again silent—"Yes—I *do* call that poetry—though it were even written by a Presbyterian, or an Anabaptist either. Ay, there were good and righteous people to be found even amongst the offending towns which were destroyed by fire. And certainly I have heard, though with little credence (begging your pardon, cousin Everard), that there are men among you, who have seen the error of their ways in rebelling against the best and kindest of masters, and bringing it to that pass that he was murdered by a gang yet fiercer than themselves. Ay, doubtless the gentleness of spirit, and the purity of mind, which dictated those beautiful lines, has long ago taught a man so amiable to say, I have sinned, I have

sinned. Yes, I doubt not so sweet a harp has been broken, even in remorse, for the crimes he was witness to; and now he sits drooping for the shame and sorrow of England,—all his noble rhymes, as Will says,

Like sweet bells jangled out of tune and harsh.

Dost thou not think so, Master Kerneguy?"

"Not I, Sir Henry," answered the page, somewhat maliciously.

"What, dost not believe the author of these lines must needs be of the better file, and leaning to our persuasion?"

"I think, Sir Henry, that the poetry qualifies the author to write a play on the subject of Dame Potiphar and her recusant lover; and has for his calling—that last metaphor of the cloud in a black coat or cloak, with silver lining, would have dubbed him a tailor with me, only that I happen to know that he is a schoolmaster by profession, and by political opinions qualified to be Poet Laureate to Cromwell; for what Colonel Everard has repeated with such unction, is the production of no less celebrated a person than John Milton."

"John Milton!" exclaimed Sir Henry, in astonishment—"What! John Milton, the blasphemous and bloody-minded author of the *Defensio Populi Anglicani!*—the advocate of the infernal High Court of Fiends!—the creature and parasite of that grand impostor, that loathsome hypocrite, that detestable monster, that prodigy of the universe, that disgrace of

mankind, that landscape of iniquity, that sink of sin, and that compendium of baseness, Oliver Cromwell!"

"Even the same John Milton," answered Charles; "schoolmaster to little boys, and tailor to the clouds, which he furnishes with suits of black, lined with silver, at no other expense than that of common sense."

"Markham Everard," said the old knight, "I will never forgive thee—never, never. Thou hast made me speak words of praise respecting one whose offal should fatten the region-kites. Speak not to me, sir, but begone! Am I, your kinsman and benefactor, a fit person to be juggled out of my commendation and eulogy, and brought to bedaub such a whitened sepulchre as the sophist Milton?"

"I profess," said Everard, "this is hard measure, Sir Henry. You pressed me—you defied me, to produce poetry as good as Shakspeare's. I only thought of the verses, not of the politics of Milton."

"Oh yes, sir," replied Sir Henry, "we well know your power of making distinctions; "you could make war against the King's prerogative, without having the least design against his person. Oh Heaven forbid! But Heaven will hear and judge you.—Set down the beverage, Phœbe" (this was added by way of parenthesis to Phœbe, who entered with refreshment)—"Colonel Everard is not thirsty.—You have wiped your mouths, and said you have done no evil. But though you have deceived man, yet God you cannot deceive. And you shall wipe no lips in Woodstock, either after meat or drink, I promise you."

Charged thus at once with the faults imputed to his whole religious sect and political party, Everard felt too late of what imprudence he had been guilty in giving the opening, by disputing his uncle's taste in dramatic poetry. He endeavoured to explain—to apologize.

"I mistook your purpose, honoured sir, and thought you really desired to know something of our literature; and in repeating what you deemed not unworthy your hearing, I profess I thought I was doing you pleasure, instead of stirring your indignation."

"O ay!" returned the knight, with unmitigated rigour of resentment—"profess—profess—Ay, that is the new phrase of asseveration, instead of the profane adoration of courtiers and cavaliers—Oh, sir, *profess* less and *practise* more—and so good day to you.—Master Kerneguy, you will find beverage in my apartment."

While Phœbe stood gaping in admiration at the sudden quarrel which had arisen, Colonel Everard's vexation and resentment was not a little increased by the nonchalance of the young Scotsman, who, with his hands thrust into his pockets (with a courtly affectation of the time), had thrown himself into one of the antique chairs, and, though habitually too polite to laugh aloud, and possessing that art of internal laughter by which men of the world learn to indulge their mirth without incurring quarrels, or giving direct offence, was at no particular trouble to conceal that he was exceedingly amused by the result of the Colonel's visit to Woodstock. Colonel Everard's patience, however, had reached bounds which it was very likely to surpass; for, though differing

widely in politics, there was a resemblance betwixt the temper of the uncle and nephew.

"Damnation!" exclaimed the Colonel, in a tone which became a puritan as little as did the exclamation itself.

"Amen!" said Louis Kerneguy, but in a tone so soft and gentle, that the ejaculation seemed rather to escape him than to be designedly uttered.

"Sir!" said Everard, striding towards him in that sort of humour, when a man, full of resentment, would not unwillingly find an object on which to discharge it.

"*Plait il?*" said the page, in the most equable tone, looking up in his face with the most unconscious innocence.

"I wish to know, sir," retorted Everard, "the meaning of that which you said just now?"

"Only a pouring out of the spirit, worthy sir," returned Kerneguy—"a small skiff despatched to Heaven on my own account, to keep company with your holy petition just now expressed"

"Sir, I have known a merry gentleman's bones broke for such a smile as you wear just now," replied Everard.

"There, look you now!" answered the malicious page, who could not weigh even the thoughts of his safety against the enjoyment of his jest—"If you had stuck to your *professions*, worthy sir, you must have choked by this time; but your round execration bolted like a cork from a bottle of cider and now allows your

wrath to come foaming out after it, in the honest unbaptized language of common ruffians."

"For Heaven's sake, Master Girnegy," said Phœbe, "forbear giving the Colonel these bitter words! And do you, good Colonel Markham, scorn to take offence at his hands—he is but a boy."

"If the Colonel or you choose, Mistress Phœbe, you shall find me a man—I think the gentleman can say something to the purpose already.—Probably he may recommend to you the part of the Lady in Comus; and I only hope his own admiration of John Milton will not induce him to undertake the part of Samson Agonistes, and blow up this old house with execrations, or pull it down in wrath about our ears."

"Young man," said the Colonel, still in towering passion, "if you respect my principles for nothing else, be grateful to the protection which, but for them, you would not easily attain."

"Nay, then," said the attendant, "I must fetch those who have more influence with you than I have," and away tripped Phœbe; while Kerneguy answered Everard in the same provoking tone of calm indifference,—

"Before you menace me with a thing so formidable as your resentment, you ought to be certain whether I may not be compelled by circumstances to deny you the opportunity you seem to point at."

At this moment Alice, summoned no doubt by her attendant, entered the hall hastily.

"Master Kerneguy," she said, "my father requests to see you in Victor Lee's apartment."

Kerneguy arose and bowed, but seemed determined to remain till Everard's departure, so as to prevent any explanation betwixt the cousins.

"Markham," said Alice, hurriedly—"Cousin Everard—I have but a moment to remain here—for God's sake, do you instantly begone!—be cautious and patient—but do not tarry here—my father is fearfully incensed."

"I have had my uncle's word for that, madam," replied Everard, "as well as his injunction to depart, which I will obey without delay. I was not aware that you would have seconded so harsh an order quite so willingly; but I go, madam, sensible I leave those behind whose company is more agreeable."

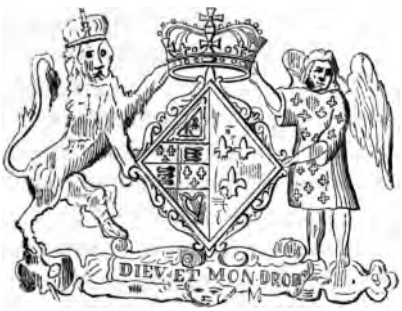
"Unjust—ungenerous—ungrateful!" said Alice; but fearful her words might reach ears for which they were not designed, she spoke them in a voice so feeble, that her cousin, for whom they were intended, lost the consolation they were calculated to convey.

He bowed coldly to Alice, as taking leave, and said, with an air of that constrained courtesy which sometimes covers, among men of condition, the most deadly hatred, "I believe, Master Kerneguy, that I must make it convenient at present to suppress my own peculiar opinions on the matter which we have hinted at in our conversation, in which case I will send a gentleman, who, I hope, may be able to conquer yours."

The supposed Scotsman made him a stately, and at the same time a condescending bow, said he should expect the honour of his commands, offered his hand to

Mistress Alice, to conduct her back to her father's apartment, and took a triumphant leave of his rival.

Everard, on the other hand, stung beyond his patience, and, from the grace and composed assurance of the youth's carriage, still conceiving him to be either Wilmot, or some of his compeers in rank and profligacy, returned to the town of Woodstock, determined not to be outbearded, even though he should seek redress by means which his principles forbade him to consider as justifiable.



CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SIXTH.

——Boundless intemperance
In nature is a tyranny—it hath been
The untimely emptying of many a throne,
And fall of many kings.—— MACBETH.

WHILE Colonel Everard retreated in high indignation from the little refection, which Sir Henry Lee had in his good-humour offered, and withdrawn under the circumstances of provocation which we have detailed, the good old knight, scarce recovered from his fit of passion, partook of it with his daughter and guest, and shortly after, recollecting some silvan task (for, though to little efficient purpose, he still regularly attended to his duties as Ranger), he called Bevis, and went out, leaving the two young people together.

"Now," said the amorous Prince to himself, "that Alice is left without her lion, it remains to see whether she is herself of a tigress breed.—So, Sir Bevis has left his charge," he said aloud; "I thought the knights of old, those stern guardians of which he is so fit a representative, were more rigorous in maintaining a vigilant guard."

"Bevis," said Alice, "knows that his attendance on me is totally needless; and, moreover, he has other duties to perform, which every true knight prefers to dangling the whole morning by a lady's sleeve."

"You speak treason against all true affection," said the gallant; "a lady's lightest wish should to a true knight be more binding than aught excepting the summons of his sovereign. I wish, Mistress Alice, you would but intimate your slightest desire to me, and you should see how I have practised obedience."

"You never brought me word what o'clock it was this morning," replied the young lady, "and there I sat questioning of the wings of Time, when I should have remembered that gentlemen's gallantry can be quite as fugitive as Time himself. How do you know what your disobedience may have cost me and others? Pudding and pasty may have been burned to a cinder, for, sir, I practise the old domestic rule of visiting the kitchen; or I may have missed prayers, or I may have been too late for an appointment, simply by the negligence of Master Louis Kerneguy failing to let me know the hour of the day."

"O," replied Kerneguy, "I am one of those lovers

who cannot endure absence—I must be eternally at the feet of my fair enemy—such, I think, is the title with which romances teach us to grace the fair and cruel to whom we devote our hearts and lives.—Speak for me, good lute," he added, taking up the instrument, "and shew whether I know not my duty."

He sung, but with more taste than execution, the air of a French rondelai, to which some of the wits or sonnetteers, in his gay and roving train, had adapted English verses.

An hour with thee!—When earliest day
Dapples with gold the eastern grey,
Oh, what can frame my mind to bear
The toil and turmoil, cark and care,
New griefs, which coming hours unfold,
And sad remembrance of the old?
One hour with thee!

One hour with thee!—When burning June
Waves his red flag at pitch of noon;
What shall repay the faithful swain,
His labour on the sultry plain;
And more than cave or sheltering bough,
Cool feverish blood, and throbbing brow?—
One hour with thee!

One hour with thee!—When sun is set,
O, what can teach me to forget
The thankless labours of the day;
The hopes, the wishes, flung away;
The increasing wants, and lessening gains,
The master's pride, who scorns my pains?—
One hour with thee!

"Truly, there is another verse," said the songster; "but I sing it not to you Mistress Alice, because some of the prudes of the court liked it not."

"I thank you, Master Louis," answered the young lady, "both for your discretion in singing what has given me pleasure, and in forbearing what might offend me. Though a country girl, I pretend to be so far of the court mode, as to receive nothing which does not pass current among the better class there."

"I would," answered Louis, "that you were so well confirmed in their creed, as to let all pass with you, to which court ladies would give currency."

"And what would be the consequence?" said Alice, with perfect composure.

"In that case," said Louis, embarrassed like a general who finds that his preparations for attack do not seem to strike either fear or confusion into the enemy—"in that case you would forgive me, fair Alice, if I spoke to you in a warmer language than that of mere gallantry —if I told you how much my heart was interested in what you consider as idle jesting—if I seriously owned it was in your power to make me the happiest or the most miserable of human beings."

"Master Kerneguy," said Alice, with the same unshaken nonchalance, "let us understand each other. I am little acquainted with high-bred manners, and I am unwilling, I tell you plainly, to be accounted a silly country girl, who, either from ignorance or conceit, is startled at every word of gallantry addressed to her by a young man, who, for the present, has nothing better to do than coin and circulate such false compliments. But I must not let this fear of seeming rustic and awkwardly timorous carry me too far; and being

ignorant of the exact limits, I will take care to stop within them."

"I trust, madam," said Kerneguy, "that however severely you may be disposed to judge of me, your justice will not punish me too severely for an offence, of which your charms are alone the occasion?"

"Hear me out, sir, if you please," resumed Alice. "I have listened to you when you spoke *en berger*—nay, my complaisance has been so great, as to answer you *en bergère*—for I do not think anything except ridicule can come of dialogues between Lindor and Jeanneton; and the principal fault of the style is its extreme and tiresome silliness and affectation. But when you begin to kneel, offer to take my hand, and speak with a more serious tone, I must remind you of our real characters. I am the daughter of Sir Henry Lee, sir; and you are, or profess to be, Master Louis Kerneguy, my brother's page, and a fugitive for shelter under my father's roof, who incurs danger by the harbour he affords you, and whose household, therefore, ought not to be disturbed by your unpleasing importunities."

"I would to Heaven, fair Alice," said the King, "that your objections to the suit which I am urging, not in jest, but most seriously, as that on which my happiness depends, rested only on the low and precarious station of Louis Kerneguy!—Alice, thou hast the soul of thy family, and must needs love honour. I am no more the needy Scottish page, whom I have, for my own purposes, personated, than I am the awkward lout, whose manners I adopted on the first night of our

acquaintance. This hand, poor as I seem, can confer a coronet."

"Keep it," said Alice, "for some more ambitious damsel, my lord,—for such I conclude is your title, if this romance be true,—I would not accept your hand, could you confer a duchy."

"In one sense, lovely Alice, you have neither overrated my power nor my affection. It is your King—it is Charles Stuart who speaks to you!—he can confer duchies, and if beauty can merit them, it is that of Alice Lee. Nay, nay—rise—do not kneel—it is for your sovereign to kneel to thee, Alice, to whom he is a thousand times more devoted, than the wanderer Louis dared venture to profess himself. My Alice has, I know, been trained up in those principles of love and obedience to her sovereign, that she cannot, in conscience or in mercy, inflict on him such a wound as would be implied in the rejection of his suit."

In spite of all Charles's attempts to prevent her, Alice had persevered in kneeling on one knee, until she had touched with her lip the hand with which he attempted to raise her. But this salutation ended, she stood upright, with her arms folded on her bosom—her looks humble, but composed, keen and watchful, and so possessed of herself, so little flattered by the communication which the King had supposed would have been overpowering, that he scarce knew in what terms next to urge his solicitation.

"Thou art silent—thou art silent," he said, "my

pretty Alice. Has the King no more influence with thee than the poor Scottish page?"

"In one sense every influence," said Alice; "for he commands my best thoughts, my best wishes, my earnest prayers, my devoted loyalty, which, as the men of the House of Lee have been ever ready to testify with the sword, so are the women bound to seal, if necessary, with their blood. But beyond the duties of a true and devoted subject, the King is even less to Alice Lee than poor Louis Kerneguy. The page could have tendered an honourable union—the Monarch can but offer a contaminated coronet."

"You mistake, Alice,—you mistake," said the King, eagerly. "Sit down and let me speak to you—sit down —What is't you fear?"

"I fear nothing, my liege," answered Alice. "What *can* I fear from the King of Britain—I, the daughter of his loyal subject, and under my father's roof? But I remember the distance betwixt us, and though I might trifle and jest with mine equal, to my King I must only appear in the dutiful posture of a subject, unless where his safety may seem to require that I do not acknowledge his dignity."

Charles, though young, being no novice in such scenes, was surprised to encounter resistance of a kind which had not been opposed to him in similar pursuits, even in cases where he had been unsuccessful. There was neither anger, nor injured pride, nor disorder, nor disdain, real or affected, in the manners and conduct of Alice. She stood, as it seemed, calmly prepared to

argue on the subject, which is generally decided by passion—shewed no inclination to escape from the apartment, but appeared determined to hear with patience the suit of the lover—while her countenance and manner intimated that she had this complaisance, only in deference to the commands of the King.

"She is ambitious," thought Charles; "it is by dazzling her love of glory, not by mere passionate entreaties, that I must hope to be successful.—I pray you to be seated, my fair Alice," he said, "the lover entreats—the King commands you."

"The King," said Alice, "may permit the relaxation of the ceremonies due to royalty, but he cannot abrogate the subject's duty, even by express command. I stand here while it is your Majesty's pleasure to address me—a patient listener, as in duty bound."

"Know then, simple girl," said the King, "that in accepting my proffered affection and protection, you break through no law, either of virtue or morality. Those who are born to royalty are deprived of many of the comforts of private life—chiefly that which is, perhaps, the dearest and most precious, the power of choosing their own mates for life. Their formal weddings are guided upon principles of political expedience only, and those to whom they are wedded are frequently, in temper, person, and disposition, the most unlikely to make them happy. Society has commiseration, therefore, towards us, and binds our unwilling and often unhappy wedlocks with chains of a lighter and more easy character than those which fetter other men, whose

marriage ties, as more voluntarily assumed, ought, in proportion, to be more strictly binding. And therefore, ever since the time that old Henry built these walls, priests and prelates, as well as nobles and statesmen, have been accustomed to see a fair Rosamond rule the heart of an affectionate monarch, and console him for the few hours of constraint and state which he must bestow upon some angry and jealous Eleanor. To such a connection the world attaches no blame; they rush to the festival to admire the beauty of the lovely Esther, while the imperious Vashti is left to queen it in solitude; they throng the palace to ask her protection, whose influence is more in the state an hundred times than that of the proud consort; her offspring rank with the nobles of the land, and vindicate by their courage, like the celebrated Longsword, Earl of Salisbury, their descent from royalty and from love. From such connections our richest ranks of nobles are recruited; and the mother lives, in the greatness of her posterity, honoured and blessed, as she died lamented and wept in the arms of love and friendship."

"Did Rosamond so die, my lord?" said Alice. "Our records say she was poisoned by the injured Queen—poisoned without time allowed to call to God for the pardon of her many faults. Did her memory so live? I have heard that, when the Bishop purified the church at Godstowe, her monument was broken open by his orders, and her bones thrown out into unconsecrated ground."

"Those were rude old days, sweet Alice," answered

Charles; "queens are not now so jealous, nor bishops so rigorous. And know, besides, that, in the lands to which I would lead the loveliest of her sex, other laws obtain, which remove from such ties even the slightest show of scandal. There is a mode of matrimony, which, fulfilling all the rites of the church, leaves no stain on the conscience; yet investing the bride with none of the privileges peculiar to her husband's condition, infringes not upon the duties which the King owes to his subjects. So that Alice Lee may, in all respects, become the real and lawful wife of Charles Stuart, except that their private union gives her no title to be Queen of England."

"My ambition," said Alice, "will be sufficiently gratified to see Charles king, without aiming to share either his dignity in public, or his wealth and regal luxury in private."

"I understand thee, Alice," said the King, hurt but not displeased. "You ridicule me, being a fugitive, for speaking like a king. It is a habit, I admit, which I have learned, and of which even misfortune cannot cure me. But my case is not so desperate as you may suppose. My friends are still many in these kingdoms; my allies abroad are bound, by regard to their own interest, to espouse my cause. I have hopes given me from Spain, from France, and from other nations; and I have confidence that my father's blood has not been poured forth in vain, nor is doomed to dry up without due vengeance. My trust is in him from whom princes derive their title, and, think what thou wilt of my

present condition, I have perfect confidence that I shall one day sit on the throne of England."

"May God grant it!" said Alice; "and that he *may* grant it, noble Prince, deign to consider whether you now pursue a conduct likely to conciliate his favour. Think of the course you recommend to a motherless maiden, who has no better defence against your sophistry, than what a sense of morality, together with the natural feeling of female dignity inspires. Whether the death of her father, which would be the consequence of her imprudence;—whether the despair of her brother, whose life has been so often in peril to save that of your Majesty;—whether the dishonour of the roof which has sheltered you, will read well in your annals, or are events likely to propitiate God, whose controversy with your House has been but too visible, or recover the affections of the people of England, in whose eyes such actions are an abomination, I leave to your own royal mind to consider."

Charles paused, struck with a turn to the conversation which placed his own interests more in collision with the gratification of his present passion than he had supposed.

"If your Majesty," said Alice, courtesying deeply, "has no farther commands for my attendance, may I be permitted to withdraw?"

"Stay yet a little, strange and impracticable girl,' said the King, "and answer me but one question:—Is it the lowness of my present fortunes that makes my suit contemptible?"

"I have nothing to conceal, my liege," she said, "and my answer shall be as plain and direct as the question you have asked. If I could have been moved to an act of ignominious, insane, and ungrateful folly, it could only arise from my being blinded by that passion, which I believe is pleaded as an excuse for folly and for crime much more often than it has a real existence. I must, in short, have been in love, as it is called—and that might have been with my equal—but surely never with my sovereign, whether such only in title, or in possession of his kingdom."

"Yet loyalty was ever the pride, almost the ruling passion, of your family, Alice," said the King.

"And could I reconcile that loyalty," said Alice, "with indulging my sovereign, by permitting him to prosecute a suit dishonourable to himself as to me? Ought I, as a faithful subject, to join him in a folly, which might throw yet another stumbling-block in the path to his restoration, and could only serve to diminish his security, even if he were seated upon his throne?"

"At this rate," said Charles, discontentedly, "I had better have retained my character of the page, than assumed that of a sovereign, which it seems is still more irreconcilable with my wishes."

"My candour shall go still farther," said Alice. "I could have felt as little for Louis Kerneguy as for the heir of Britain; for such love as I have to bestow (and it is not such as I read of in romance, or hear poured forth in song), has been already conferred on another object. This gives your Majesty pain—I am

sorry for it—but the wholesomest medicines are often bitter."

"Yes," answered the King, with some asperity, "and physicians are reasonable enough to expect their patients to swallow them, as if they were honey-comb. It is true, then, that whispered tale of the cousin Colonel; and the daughter of the loyal Lee has set her heart upon a rebellious fanatic?"

"My love was given ere I knew what these words fanatic and rebel meant. I recalled it not, for I am satisfied, that amidst the great distractions which divide the kingdom, the person to whom you allude has chosen his part, erroneously perhaps, but conscientiously—he, therefore, has still the highest place in in my affection and esteem. More he cannot have, and will not ask, until some happy turn shall reconcile these public differences, and my father be once more reconciled to him. Devoutly do I pray that such an event may occur by your Majesty's speedy and unanimous restoration!"

"You have found out a reason," said the King pettishly, "to make me detest the thought of such a change—nor have you, Alice, any sincere interest to pray for it. On the contrary, do you not see that your lover, walking side by side with Cromwell, may, or rather must share his power? nay, if Lambert does not anticipate him, he may trip up Oliver's heels, and reign in his stead. And think you not he will find means to overcome the pride of the loyal Lees, and achieve a union, for which things are better prepared than that

which Cromwell is said to meditate betwixt one of his brats and the no less loyal heir of Fauconberg?"

"Your Majesty," said Alice, "has found a way at length to avenge yourself—if what I have said deserves vengeance."

"I could point out a yet shorter road to your union," said Charles, without minding her distress, or perhaps enjoying the pleasure of retaliation. "Suppose that you sent your Colonel word that there was one Charles Stuart here, who had come to disturb the Saints in their peaceful government, which they had acquired by prayer and preaching, pike and gun—and suppose he had the art to bring down a half-score of troopers, quite enough, as times go, to decide the fate of this heir of royalty—think you not the possession of such a prize as this might obtain from the Rumpers, or from Cromwell, such a reward as might overcome your father's objections to a roundhead's alliance, and place the fair Alice and her cousin Colonel in full possession of their wishes?"

"My liege," said Alice, her cheeks glowing, and her eyes sparkling—for she too had her share of the hereditary temperament of her family—"this passes my patience. I have heard, without expressing anger, the most ignominious persuasions addressed to myself, and I have vindicated myself for refusing to be the paramour of a fugitive Prince, as if I had been excusing myself from accepting a share of an actual crown. But do you think I can hear all who are dear to me slandered without emotion or reply? I will not, sir, and were you

seated with all the terrors of your father's Star-chamber around you, you should hear me defend the absent and the innocent. Of my father I will say nothing, but that if he is now without wealth—without state, almost without a sheltering home and needful food—it is because he spent all in the service of the King. He needed not to commit any act of treachery or villany to obtain wealth—he had an ample competence in his own possessions. For Markham Everard—he knows no such thing as selfishness—he would not, for broad England, had she the treasures of Peru in her bosom, and a paradise on her surface, do a deed that would disgrace his own name, or injure the feelings of another—Kings, my liege, may take a lesson from him. My liege, for the present I take my leave."

"Alice, Alice—stay!" exclaimed the King. "She is gone.—This must be virtue—real, disinterested, overawing virtue—or there is no such thing on earth. Yet Wilmot and Villiers will not believe a word of it, but add the tale to the other wonders of Woodstock.—'Tis a rare wench! and I profess, to use the Colonel's obtestation, that I know not whether to forgive and be friends with her or study a dire revenge. If it were not for that accursed cousin—that puritan Colonel—I could forgive everything else to so noble a wench. But a roundheaded rebel preferred to me—the preference avowed to my face, and justified with the assertion, that a king might take a lesson from him—it is gall and wormwood. If the old man had not come up this morning as he did, the King should have taken or

given a lesson, and a severe one. It was a mad rencontre to venture upon with my rank and responsibility —and yet this wench has made me so angry with her, and so envious of him, that if an opportunity offered, I should scarce be able to forbear him.—Ha! whom have we here?"

The interjection at the conclusion of this royal soliloquy, was occasioned by the unexpected entrance of another personage of the drama.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SEVENTH.

Benedict. Shall I speak a word in your ear?
Claudio. God bless me from a challenge.
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

As Charles was about to leave the apartment, he was prevented by the appearance of Wildrake, who entered with an unusual degree of swagger in his gait, and of fantastic importance on his brow. "I crave your pardon, fair sir," he said; "but, as they say in my country, when doors are open dogs enter. I have knocked and called in the hall to no purpose; so, knowing the way to this parlour, sir,—for I am a light

partisan, and the road I once travel I never forget—I venture to present myself unannounced."

"Sir Henry Lee is abroad, sir, I believe, in the Chase," said Charles, coldly, for the appearance of this somewhat vulgar debauchee was not agreeable to him at the moment, "and Master Albert Lee has left the Lodge for two or three days."

"I am aware of it, sir," said Wildrake; "but I have no business at present with either."

"And with whom is your business?" said Charles; "that is, if I may be permitted to ask—since I think it cannot in possibility be with me."

"Pardon me in turn, sir," answered the cavalier; "in no possibility can it be imparted to any other but yourself, if you be, as I think you are, though in something better habit, Master Louis Girnigo, the Scottish gentleman who waits upon Master Albert Lee."

"I am all you are like to find for him," answered Charles.

"In truth," said the cavalier, "I do perceive a difference, but rest, and better clothing will do much; and I am glad of it, since I would be sorry to have brought a message such as I am charged with, to a tatterdemalion."

"Let us get to the business, sir, if you please," said the King—"you have a message for me, you say?"

"True, sir," replied Wildrake; "I am the friend of Colonel Markham Everard, sir, a tall man, and a worthy person in the field, although I could wish him a better cause—A message I have to you, it is certain, in a

slight note, which I take the liberty of presenting with the usual formalities." So saying, he drew his sword, put the billet he mentioned upon the point, and making a profound bow, presented it to Charles.

The disguised monarch accepted of it, with a grave return of the salute, and said, as he was about to open the letter, "I am not, I presume, to expect friendly contents in an epistle presented in so hostile a manner?"

"A-hem, sir," replied the ambassador, clearing his voice, while he arranged a suitable answer, in which the mild strain of diplomacy might be properly maintained; "not utterly hostile, I suppose, sir, is the invitation, though it be such as must be construed in the commencement rather bellicose and pugnacious. I trust, sir, we shall find that a few thrusts will make a handsome conclusion of the business; and so, as my old master used to say, *Pax nascitur ex bello.* For my own poor share, I am truly glad to have been graced by my friend Markham Everard in this matter—the rather as I feared the puritan principles with which he is imbued (I will confess the truth to you, worthy sir), might have rendered him unwilling, from certain scruples, to have taken the gentlemanlike and honourable mode of righting himself in such a case as the present. And as I render a friend's duty to my friend, so I humbly hope, Master Louis Girnigo, that I do no injustice to you, in preparing the way for the proposed meeting, where, give me leave to say, I trust, that if no fatal accident occur, we shall be all better friends

when the skirmish is over than we were before it began."

"I should suppose so, sir, in any case," said Charles, looking at the letter; "worse than mortal enemies we can scarce be, and it is that footing upon which this billet places us."

"You say true, sir," said Wildrake; "it is, sir, a cartel, introducing to a single combat, for the pacific object of restoring a perfect good understanding betwixt the survivors—in case that fortunately that word can be used in the plural after the event of the meeting."

"In short, we only fight, I suppose," replied the King, "that we may come to a perfectly good and amicable understanding?"

"You are right again, sir; and I thank you for the clearness of your apprehension," said Wildrake.—"Ah, sir, it is easy to do with a person of honour and of intellect in such a case as this. And I beseech you, sir, as a personal kindness to myself, that as the morning is like to be frosty, and myself am in some sort rheumatic—as war will leave its scars behind, sir—I say, I will entreat of you to bring with you some gentleman of honour, who will not disdain to take part of what is going forward—a sort of pot-luck, sir—with a poor old soldier like myself—that we may take no harm by standing unoccupied during such cold weather."

"I understand, sir," replied Charles; "if this matter goes forward, be assured I will endeavour to provide you with a suitable opponent."

"I shall remain greatly indebted to you sir," said

Wildrake; "and I am by no means curious about the quality of my antagonist.—It is true I write myself esquire and gentleman, and should account myself especially honoured by crossing my sword with that of Sir Henry or Master Albert Lee; but, should that not be convenient, I will not refuse to present my poor person in opposition to any gentleman who has served the King, which I always hold as a sort of letters of nobility in itself, and therefore, would on no account decline the duello with such a person."

"The King is much obliged to you, sir," said Charles, "for the honour you do his faithful subjects."

"O, sir, I am scrupulous on that point—very scrupulous.—When there is a roundhead in question, I consult the Herald's books, to see that he is entitled to bear arms, as is Master Markham Everard, without which, I promise you, I had borne none of his cartel. But a cavalier is with me a gentleman, of course—Be his birth ever so low, his loyalty has ennobled his condition."

"It is well, sir," said the King. "This paper requests me to meet Master Everard at six to-morrow morning, at the tree called the King's Oak.—I object neither to place nor time. He proffers the sword, at which, he says, we possess some equality—I do not decline the weapon; for company, two gentlemen—I shall endeavour to procure myself an associate, and a suitable partner for you, sir, if you incline to join in the dance."

"I kiss your hand, sir, and rest yours, under a sense of obligation," answered the envoy.

"I thank you, sir," continued the King; "I will therefore be ready at place and time, and suitably furnished; and I will either give your friend such satisfaction with my sword as he requires, or will render him such cause for not doing so as he will be contented with."

"You will excuse me, sir," said Wildrake, "if my mind is too dull, under the circumstances, to conceive any alternative that can remain betwixt two men of honour in such a case, excepting—sa—sa—." He threw himself into a fencing position, and made a pass with his sheathed rapier, but not directed towards the person of the King, whom he addressed.

"Excuse me, sir," said Charles, "if I do not trouble your intellects with the consideration of a case which may not occur.—But, for example, I may plead urgent employment on the part of the public."—This he spoke in a low and mysterious tone of voice, which Wildrake appeared perfectly to comprehend; for he laid his forefinger on his nose with what he meant for a very intelligent and apprehensive nod.

"Sir," said he, "if you be engaged in any affair for the King, my friend shall have every reasonable degree of patience—Nay, I will fight him myself in your stead, merely to stay his stomach, rather than you should be interrupted.—And, sir, if you can find room in your enterprise for a poor gentleman that has followed Lunsford and Goring, you have but to name day, time,

and place of rendezvous; for truly, sir, I am tired of the scald hat, cropped hair, and undertaker's cloak, with which my friend has bedizened me, and would willingly ruffle it out once more in the King's cause, when whether I be banged or hanged, I care not."

"I shall remember what you say, sir, should an opportunity occur," said the King; "and I wish his Majesty had many such subjects.—I presume our business is now settled?"

"When you shall have been pleased, sir, to give me a trifling scrap of writing, to serve for my credentials—for such, you know, is the custom—your written cartel hath its written answer."

"That, sir, will I presently do," said Charles, "and in good time—here are the materials."

"And, sir," continued the envoy—"Ahi!—ahem!—if you have interest in the household for a cup of sack—I am a man of few words, and am somewhat hoarse with much speaking—moreover, a serious business of this kind always makes one thirsty.—Besides, sir, to part with dry lips argues malice, which God forbid should exist in such an honourable conjuncture."

"I do not boast much influence in the house, sir," said the King; "but if you would have the condescension to accept of this broad piece towards quenching your thirst at the George——"

"Sir," said the cavalier (for the times admitted of this strange species of courtesy, nor was Wildrake a man of such peculiar delicacy as keenly to dispute the matter),—"I am once again beholden to you. But I

see not how it consists with my honour to accept of such accommodation, unless you were to accompany and partake?"

"Pardon me, sir," replied Charles, "my safety recommends that I remain rather private at present."

"Enough said," Wildrake observed; "poor cavaliers must not stand on ceremony. I see, sir, you understand cutter's law—when one tall fellow has coin, another must not be thirsty. I wish you, sir, a continuance of health and happiness until to-morrow, at the King's Oak, at six o'clock."

"Farewell, sir," said the King, and added, as Wildrake went down the stair, whistling, "Hey for cavaliers," to which air his long rapier, jarring against the steps and banisters, bore no unsuitable burden—"Farewell, thou too just emblem of the state, to which war, and defeat, and despair, have reduced many a gallant gentleman."

During the rest of the day, there occurred nothing peculiarly deserving of notice. Alice sedulously avoided shewing towards the disguised prince any degree of estrangement or shyness, which could be discovered by her father, or by any one else. To all appearance, the two young persons continued on the same footing in every respect. Yet she made the gallant himself sensible, that this apparent intimacy was assumed merely to save appearances, and in no way designed as retracting from the severity with which she had rejected his suit. The sense that this was the case, joined to his injured self-love, and his enmity against a successful

rival, induced Charles early to withdraw himself to a solitary walk in the wilderness, where, like Hercules in the Emblem of Cebes, divided betwixt the personifications of Virtue and of Pleasure, he listened alternately to the voice of Wisdom and of passionate Folly.

Prudence urged to him the importance of his own life to the future prosecution of the great object in which he had for the present miscarried—the restoration of monarchy in England, the rebuilding of the throne, the regaining the crown of his father, the avenging his death, and restoring to their fortunes and their country the numerous exiles, who were suffering poverty and banishment on account of their attachment to his cause. Pride too, or rather a just and natural sense of dignity, displayed the unworthiness of a Prince descending to actual personal conflict with a subject of any degree, and the ridicule which would be thrown on his memory, should he lose his life for an obscure intrigue by the hand of a private gentleman. What would his sage counsellors, Nicholas and Hyde—what would his kind and wise governor, the Marquis of Hertford, say to such an act of rashness and folly? Would it not be likely to shake the allegiance of the staid and prudent persons of the royalist party, since wherefore should they expose their lives and estates to raise to the government of a kingdom a young man who could not command his own temper? To this was to be added, the consideration that even his success would add double difficulties to his escape, which already seemed sufficiently precarious. If, stopping short of

death, he merely had the better of his antagonist, how did he know that he might not seek revenge by delivering up to government the Malignant Louis Kerneguy, whose real character could not in that case fail to be discovered?

These considerations strongly recommended to Charles that he should clear himself of the challenge without fighting; and the reservation under which he had accepted it, afforded him some opportunity of doing so.

But Passion also had her arguments, which she addressed to a temper rendered irritable by recent distress and mortification. In the first place, if he was a prince, he was also a gentleman, entitled to resent as such, and obliged to give or claim the satisfaction expected on occasion of differences among gentlemen. With Englishmen, she urged, he could never lose interest by shewing himself ready, instead of sheltering himself under his royal birth and pretensions, to come frankly forward and maintain what he had done or said on his own responsibility. In a free nation, it seemed as if he would rather gain than lose in the public estimation by a conduct which could not but seem gallant and generous. Then a character for courage was far more necessary to support his pretensions, than any other kind of reputation; and the lying under a challenge, without replying to it, might bring his spirit into question. What would Villiers and Wilmot say of an intrigue, in which he had allowed himself to be shamefully baffled by a country girl, and had

failed to revenge himself on his rival? The pasquinades which they would compose, the witty sarcasms which they would circulate on the occasion, would be harder to endure than the grave rebukes of Hertford, Hyde, and Nicholas. This reflection, added to the stings of youthful and awakened courage, at length fixed his resolution, and he returned to Woodstock determined to keep his appointment, come of it what might.

Perhaps there mingled with his resolution a secret belief that such a rencontre would not prove fatal. He was in the flower of his youth, active in all his exercises, and no way inferior to Colonel Everard, as far as the morning's experiment had gone, in that of self-defence. At least such recollection might pass through his royal mind, as he hummed to himself a well-known ditty, which he had picked up during his residence in Scotland—

> A man may drink and not be drunk;
> A man may fight and not be slain;
> A man may kiss a bonnie lass,
> And yet be welcome back again.

Meanwhile the busy and all-directing Doctor Rochecliffe had contrived to intimate to Alice that she must give him a private audience, and she found him by appointment in what was called the study, once filled with ancient books, which, long since converted into cartridges, had made more noise in the world at their final exit, than during the space which had intervened betwixt that and their first publication. The Doctor seated himself in a high-backed leathern easy-chair, and

signed to Alice to fetch a stool and sit down beside him.

"Alice," said the old man, taking her hand affectionately, "thou art a good girl, a wise girl, a virtuous girl, one of those whose price is above rubies—not that *rubies* is the proper translation—but remind me to tell you of that another time—Alice, thou knowest who this Louis Kerneguy is—nay, hesitate not to me—I know everything—I am well aware of the whole matter. Thou knowest this honoured house holds the Fortunes of England." Alice was about to answer.—"Nay, speak not, but listen to me, Alice—How does he bear himself towards you?"

Alice coloured with the deepest crimson.—"I am a country-bred girl," she said, "and his manners are too courtlike for me."

"Enough said—I know it all.—Alice, he is exposed to a great danger to-morrow, and you must be the happy means to prevent him."

"I prevent him!—how, and in what manner?" said Alice, in surprise. "It is my duty, as a subject, to do anything—anything that may become my father's daughter——"

Here she stopped, considerably embarrassed.

"Yes," continued the Doctor, "to-morrow he hath made an appointment—an appointment with Markham Everard; the hour and place are set—six in the morning, by the King's Oak. If they meet one will probably fall."

"Now, may God forefend they should meet," said

Alice, turning as suddenly pale as she had previously reddened. "But harm cannot come of it—Everard will never lift his sword against the King."

"For that," said Dr. Rochecliffe, "I would not warrant. But if that unhappy young gentleman shall have still some reserve of the loyalty which his general conduct entirely disavows, it would not serve us here; for he knows not the King, but considers him merely as a cavalier, from whom he has received injury."

"Let him know the truth, Doctor Rochecliffe, let him know it instantly," said Alice; "*he* lift hand against the King, a fugitive and defenceless! He is incapable of it. My life on the issue, he becomes most active in his preservation."

"That is the thought of a maiden, Alice," answered the Doctor; "and, as I fear, of a maiden whose wisdom is misled by her affections. It were worse than treason to admit a rebel officer, the friend of the arch-traitor Cromwell, into so great a secret. I dare not answer for such rashness. Hammond was trusted by his father, and you know what came of it."

"Then let my father know. He will meet Markham, or send to him, representing the indignity done to him by attacking his guest."

"We dare not let your father into the secret who Louis Kerneguy really is. I did but hint the possibility of Charles taking refuge at Woodstock, and the rapture into which Sir Henry broke out, the preparations for accommodation and defence which he began to talk of, plainly shewed that the mere enthusiasm of his loyalty

would have led to a risk of discovery. It is you, Alice, who must save the hopes of every true royalist."

"I!" answered Alice; "it is impossible.—Why cannot my father be induced to interfere, as in behalf of his friend and guest, though he know him as no other than Louis Kerneguy?"

"You have forgot your father's character, my young friend," said the Doctor; "an excellent man, and the best of Christians, till there is a clashing of swords, and then he starts up the complete martialist, as deaf to every pacific reasoning, as if he were a game-cock."

"You forget, Doctor Rochecliffe," said Alice, "that this very morning, if I understand the thing aright, my father prevented them from fighting."

"Ay," answered the Doctor, "because he deemed himself bound to keep the peace in the Royal Park; but it was done with such regret, Alice, that, should he find them at it again, I am clear to foretell he will only so far postpone the combat as to conduct them to some unprivileged ground, and there bid them tilt and welcome, while he regaled his eyes with a scene so pleasing. No, Alice, it is you, and you only, who can help us in this extremity."

"I see no possibility," said she, again colouring, "how I can be of the least use."

"You must send a note," answered Doctor Rochecliffe, "to the King—a note such as all women know how to write better than any man can teach them—to meet you at the precise hour of the rendezvous. He will not fail you, for I know his unhappy foible."

"Doctor Rochecliffe," said Alice, gravely,—"you have known me from infancy—What have you seen in me to induce you to believe that I should ever follow such unbecoming counsel?"

"And if you have known *me* from infancy," retorted the Doctor, "what have you seen of *me* that you should suspect me of giving counsel to my friend's daughter which it would be misbecoming in her to follow? You cannot be fool enough, I think, to suppose, that I mean you should carry your complaisance farther than to keep him in discourse for an hour or two, till I have all in readiness for his leaving this place, from which I can frighten him by the terrors of an alleged search?—So, C. S. mounts his horse and rides off, and Mistress Alice Lee has the honour of saving him."

"Yes, at the expense of her own reputation," said Alice, "and the risk of an eternal stain on my family. You say you know all. What can the King think of my appointing an assignation with him after what has passed, and how will it be possible to disabuse him respecting the purpose of my doing so?"

"I will disabuse him, Alice; I will explain the whole."

"Doctor Rochecliffe," said Alice, "you propose what is impossible. You can do much by your ready wit and great wisdom; but if new-fallen snow were once sullied, not all your art could wash it white again; and it is altogether the same with a maiden's reputation."

"Alice, my dearest child," said the Doctor, "bethink

you that if I recommend this means of saving the life of the King, at least rescuing him from instant peril, it is because I see no other of which to avail myself. If I bid you assume, even for a moment, the semblance of what is wrong, it is but in the last extremity, and under circumstances which cannot return—I will take the surest means to prevent all evil report which can arise from what I recommend."

"Say not so, Doctor," said Alice; "better undertake to turn back the Isis than to stop the course of calumny. The King will make boast to his whole licentious court, of the ease with which, but for a sudden alarm, he could have brought off Alice Lee as a paramour—the mouth which confers honour on others, will then be the means to deprive me of mine. Take a fitter course, one more becoming your own character and profession. Do not lead him to fail in an engagement of honour, by holding out the prospect of another engagement, equally dishonourable, whether false or true. Go to the King himself, speak to him, as the servants of God have a right to speak, even to earthly sovereigns. Point out to him the folly and the wickedness of the course he is about to pursue—urge upon him, that he fear the sword, since wrath bringeth the punishment of the sword. Tell him, that the friends who died for him in the field at Worcester, on the scaffolds, and on the gibbets, since that bloody day—that the remnant who are in prison, scattered, fled, and ruined on his account, deserve better of him and his father's race, than that he should throw away his life

in an idle brawl—Tell him, that it is dishonest to venture that which is not his own, dishonourable to betray the trust which brave men have reposed in his virtue and in his courage."

Doctor Rochecliffe looked on her with a melancholy smile, his eyes glistening as he said, "Alas! Alice, even I could not plead that just cause to him so eloquently or so impressively as thou dost. But alack! Charles would listen to neither. It is not from priests, or women, he would say, that men should receive counsel in affairs of honour."

"Then hear me, Doctor Rochecliffe—I will appear at the place of rendezvous, and I will prevent the combat—do not fear that I can do what I say—at a sacrifice, indeed, but not that of my reputation. My heart may be broken"—she endeavoured to stifle her sobs with difficulty—"for the consequence; but not in the imagination of a man, and far less that man her sovereign, shall a thought of Alice Lee be associated with dishonour." She hid her face in her handkerchief, and burst out into unrestrained tears.

"What means this hysterical passion?" said Doctor Rochecliffe, surprised and somewhat alarmed by the vehemence of her grief—"Maiden, I must have no concealments—I must know."

"Exert your ingenuity, then, and discover it," said Alice—for a moment put out of temper at the Doctor's pertinacious self-importance—"Guess my purpose, as you can guess at everything else. It is enough to have to go through my task, I will not endure the distress

of telling it over, and that to one who—forgive me, dear Doctor—might not think my agitation on this occasion fully warranted."

"Nay, then, my young mistress, you must be ruled," said Rochecliffe; "and if I cannot make you explain yourself, I must see whether your father can gain so far on you." So saying, he arose somewhat displeased, and walked towards the door.

"You forget what you yourself told me, Doctor Rochecliffe," said Alice, "of the risk of communicating this great secret to my father."

"It is too true," he said, stopping short and turning round; "and I think, wench, thou art too smart for me, and I have not met many such. But thou art a good girl, and wilt tell me thy device of free will—it concerns my character and influence with the King, that I should be fully acquainted with whatever is *actum atque tractatum*, done and treated of in this matter."

"Trust your character to me, good Doctor," said Alice, attempting to smile; "it is of firmer stuff than those of women, and will be safer in my custody than mine could have been in yours. And thus much I condescend—you shall see the whole scene—you shall go with me yourself, and much will I feel emboldened and heartened by your company."

"That is something," said the Doctor, though not altogether satisfied with this limited confidence. "Thou wert ever a clever wench, and I will trust thee—indeed, trust thee I find I must, whether voluntarily or no."

"Meet me, then," said Alice, "in the wilderness to-morrow. But first tell me, are you well assured of time and place?—a mistake were fatal."

"Assure yourself my information is entirely accurate," said the Doctor, resuming his air of consequence, which had been a little diminished during the latter part of their conference.

"May I ask," said Alice, "through what channel you acquired such important information?"

"You may ask, unquestionably," he answered, now completely restored to his supremacy; "but whether I will answer or not, is a very different question. I conceive neither your reputation nor my own is interested in your remaining in ignorance on that subject. So I have my secrets as well as you, mistress; and some of them, I fancy, are a good deal more worth knowing."

"Be it so," said Alice, quietly; "if you will meet me in the wilderness by the broken dial at half past five exactly, we will go together to-morrow, and watch them as they come to the rendezvous. I will on the way get the better of my present timidity, and explain to you the means I design to employ to prevent mischief. You can perhaps think of making some effort which may render my interference, unbecoming and painful as it must be, altogether unnecessary."

"Nay, my child," said the Doctor, "if you place yourself in my hands, you will be the first that ever had reason to complain of my want of conduct, and you may well judge you are the very last (one excepted) whom I would see suffer for want of counsel.—At half

past five, then, at the dial in the wilderness—and God bless our undertaking!"

Here their interview was interrupted by the sonorous voice of Sir Henry Lee, which shouted their names, "Daughter Alice—Doctor Rochecliffe," through passage and gallery.

"What do you here," said he, entering, "sitting like two crows in a mist, when we have such rare sport below? Here is this wild crack-brained boy Louis Kerneguy, now making me laugh till my sides are fit to split, and now playing on his guitar sweetly enough to win a lark from the heavens.—Come away with you, come away. It is hard work to laugh alone."

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-EIGHTH.

This is the place, the centre of the grove;
Here stands the oak, the monarch of the wood.

JOHN HOME.

THE sun had risen on the broad boughs of the forest, but without the power of penetrating into its recesses, which hung rich with heavy dewdrops, and were beginning on some of the trees to exhibit the varied tints of autumn; it being the season when Nature, like a

prodigal whose race is well-nigh run, seems desirous to make up in profuse gaiety and variety of colours, for the short space which her splendour has then to endure. The birds were silent—and even Robin-red-breast, whose chirruping song was heard among the bushes near the Lodge, emboldened by the largesses with which the good old knight always encouraged his familiarity, did not venture into the recesses of the wood, where he encountered the sparrowhawk, and other enemies of a similar description, preferring the vicinity of the dwellings of man, from whom he, almost solely among the feathered tribes, seems to experience disinterested protection.

The scene was therefore at once lovely and silent, when the good Doctor Rochecliffe, wrapped in a scarlet roquelaure, which had seen service in its day, muffling his face more from habit than necessity, and supporting Alice on his arm (she also defended by a cloak against the cold and damp of the autumn morning), glided through the tangled and long grass of the darkest alleys, almost ankle-deep in dew, towards the place appointed for the intended duel. Both so eagerly maintained the consultation in which they were engaged, that they were alike insensible of the roughness and discomforts of the road, though often obliged to force their way through brushwood and coppice, which poured down on them all the liquid pearls with which they were loaded, till the mantles they were wrapped in hung lank by their sides, and clung to their shoulders heavily charged with moisture. They stopped when

they had attained a station under the coppice, and shrouded by it, from which they could see all that passed on the little esplanade before the King's Oak, whose broad and scathed form, contorted and shattered limbs, and frowning brows, made it appear like some ancient war-worn champion, well selected to be the umpire of a field of single combat.

The first person who appeared at the rendezvous was the gay cavalier Roger Wildrake. He also was wrapped in his cloak, but had discarded his puritanic beaver, and wore in its stead a Spanish hat, with a feather and gilt hatband, all of which had encountered bad weather and hard service; but to make amends for the appearance of poverty by the show of pretension, the castor was accurately adjusted after what was rather profanely called the d—me cut, used among the more desperate cavaliers. He advanced hastily, and exclaimed aloud—"First in the field after all, by Jove, though I bilked Everard in order to have my morning draught. —It has done me much good," he added, smacking his lips.—"Well, I suppose I should search the ground ere my principal comes up, whose Presbyterian watch trudges as slow as his Presbyterian step.

He took his rapier from under his cloak, and seemed about to search the thickets around.

"I will prevent him," whispered the Doctor to Alice. "I will keep faith with you—you shall not come on the scene—*nisi dignus vindice nodus*—I'll explain that another time. *Vindex* is feminine as well as masculine, so the quotation is defensible.—Keep you close."

So saying, he stepped forward on the esplanade and bowed to Wildrake.

"Master Louis Kerneguy," said Wildrake, pulling off his hat; but instantly discovering his error, he added, "But no—I beg your pardon, sir—Fatter, shorter, older.—Mr. Kerneguy's friend I suppose, with whom I hope to have a turn by and by.—And why not now, sir, before our principals come up? just a snack to stay the orifice of the stomach, till the dinner is served, sir? What say you?"

"To open the orifice of the stomach more likely, or to give it a new one," said the doctor.

"True, sir," said Roger, who seemed now in his element; "you say well—that is as thereafter may be. —But come, sir, you wear your face muffled. I grant you, it is honest men's fashion at this unhappy time; the more is the pity. But we do all above board—we have no traitors here. I'll get into my gears first, to encourage you, and shew you that you have to deal with a gentleman, who honours the King, and is a match fit to fight with any who follow him, as doubtless you do, sir, since you are the friend of Master Louis Kerneguy."

All this while, Wildrake was busied undoing the clasps of his square-caped cloak.

"Off—off, ye lendings," he said, "borrowings I should more properly call you—

Via the curtain which shadowed Borgia."

So saying, he threw the cloak from him, and appeared in cuerpo, in a most cavalier-like doublet, of greasy

crimson satin, pinked and slashed with what had been once white tiffany; breeches of the same; and nether-stocks, or, as we now call them, stockings, darned in many places, and which, like those of Poins, had been once peach-coloured. A pair of pumps, ill calculated for a walk through the dew, and a broad shoulderbelt of tarnished embroidery, completed his equipment.

"Come, sir!" he exclaimed; "make haste, off with your slough—Here I stand tight and true—as loyal a lad as ever stuck rapier through a roundhead.—Come, sir, to your tools!" he continued; "we may have half-a-dozen thrusts before they come yet, and shame them for their tardiness.—Pshaw!" he exclaimed, in a most disappointed tone, when the Doctor, unfolding his cloak, shewed his clerical dress; "Tush! it's but the parson after all!"

Wildrake's respect for the Church, however, and his desire to remove one who might possibly interrupt a scene to which he looked forward with peculiar satisfaction, induced him presently to assume another tone.

"I beg pardon," he said, "my dear Doctor—I kiss the hem of your cassock—I do, by the thundering Jove—I beg your pardon again.—But I am happy I have met with you—They are raving for your presence at the Lodge—to marry, or christen, or bury, or confess, or something very urgent.—For Heaven's sake, make haste!"

"At the Lodge?" said the doctor; "why, I left the Lodge this instant—I was there later, I am sure, than you could be, who came the Woodstock road."

"Well," replied Wildrake, "it is at Woodstock they want you.—Rat it, did I say the Lodge?—No, no—Woodstock—Mine host cannot be hanged—his daughter married—his bastard christened, or his wife buried—without the assistance of a *real* clergyman—Your Holdenoughs won't do for them.—He's a true man mine host; so, as you value your function, make haste."

"You will pardon me, Master Wildrake," said the Doctor—"I wait for Master Louis Kerneguy."

"The devil you do!" exclaimed Wildrake. "Why, I always knew the Scots could do nothing without their minister; but d—n it, I never thought they put them to this use neither. But I have known jolly customers in orders, who understood to handle the sword as well as their prayerbook. You know the purpose of our meeting, Doctor. Do you come only as a ghostly comforter—or as a surgeon, perhaps—or do you ever take bilboa in hand?—Sa, sa!"

Here he made a fencing demonstration with his sheathed rapier.

"I have done so, sir, on necessary occasion," said Doctor Rochecliffe.

"Good sir, let this stand for a necessary one," said Wildrake. "You know my devotion for the Church. If a divine of your skill would do me the honour to exchange but three passes with me, I should think myself happy for ever."

"Sir," said Rochecliffe, smiling, "were there no other objection to what you propose, I have not the means—I have no weapon."

"What? you want the *de quoi?* that is unlucky indeed. But you have a stout cane in your hand—what hinders our trying a pass (my rapier being sheathed of course) until our principals come up? My pumps are full of this frost-dew; and I shall be a toe or two out of pocket, if I am to stand still all the time they are stretching themselves; for, I fancy, Doctor, you are of my opinion, that the matter will not be a fight of cock-sparrows."

"My business here is to make it, if possible, be no fight at all," said the divine.

"Now, rat me, Doctor, but that is too spiteful," said Wildrake; "and were it not for my respect for the Church, I could turn Presbyterian, to be revenged."

"Stand back a little, if you please, sir," said the Doctor; "do not press forward in that direction."—For Wildrake, in the agitation of his movements, induced by his disappointment, approached the spot where Alice remained still concealed.

"And wherefore not, I pray you, Doctor?" said the cavalier.

But on advancing a step, he suddenly stopped short, and muttered to himself, with a round oath of astonishment, "A petticoat in the coppice, by all that is reverend, and at this hour in the morning—*Whew—ew—ew!*"—He gave vent to his surprise in a long low interjectional whistle; then turning to the Doctor, with his finger on the side of his nose, "You're sly, Doctor, d—d sly! But why not give me a hint of your—your commodity

there—your contraband goods? Gad, sir, I am not a man to expose the eccentricities of the Church."

"Sir," said Doctor Rochecliffe, "you are impertinent; and if time served, and it were worth my while, I would chastise you."

And the Doctor, who had served long enough in the wars to have added some of the qualities of a captain of horse to those of a divine, actually raised his cane, to the infinite delight of the rake, whose respect for the Church was by no means able to subdue his love of mischief.

"Nay, Doctor," said he, "if you wield your weapon backsword-fashion, in that way, and raise it as high as your head, I shall be through you in a twinkling." So saying he made a pass with his sheathed rapier, not precisely at the doctor's person, but in that direction; when Rochecliffe, changing the direction of his cane from the broadsword guard to that of the rapier, made the cavalier's sword spring ten yards out of his hand, with all the dexterity of my friend Francalanza. At this moment both the principal parties appeared on the field.

Everard exclaimed angrily to Wildrake, "Is this your friendship? In Heaven's name, what make you in that fool's jacket, and playing the pranks of a jack-pudding?" while his worthy second, somewhat crest-fallen, held down his head, like a boy caught in roguery, and went to pick up his weapon, stretching his head as he passed, into the coppice, to obtain another glimpse, if possible, of the concealed object of his curiosity.

Charles, in the meantime, still more surprised at what he beheld, called out on his part—"What! Doctor Rochecliffe become literally one of the church militant, and tilting with my friend cavalier Wildrake? May I use the freedom to ask him to withdraw, as Colonel Everard and I have some private business to settle?"

It was Doctor Rochecliffe's cue, on this important occasion, to have armed himself with the authority of his sacred office, and used a tone of interference which might have overawed even a monarch, and made him feel that his monitor spoke by a warrant higher than his own. But the indiscreet latitude he had just given to his own passion, and the levity in which he had been detected, were very unfavourable to his assuming that superiority, to which so uncontrollable a spirit as that of Charles, wilful as a prince, and capricious as a wit, was at all likely to submit. The Doctor did, however, endeavour to rally his dignity, and replied, with the gravest, and at the same time the most respectful, tone he could assume, that he also had business of the most urgent nature, which prevented him from complying with Master Kerneguy's wishes, and leaving that spot.

"Excuse this untimely interruption," said Charles, taking off his hat, and bowing to Colonel Everard, "which I will immediately put an end to."

Everard gravely returned his salute, and was silent.

"Are you mad, Doctor Rochecliffe?" said Charles—"or are you deaf?—or have you forgotten your mother-tongue? I desired you to leave this place."

"I am not mad," said the divine, rousing up his resolution, and regaining the natural firmness of his voice—"I would prevent others from being so;—I am not deaf—I would pray others to hear the voice of reason and religion; I have not forgotten my mother-tongue—but I have come hither to speak the language of the Master of kings and princes."

"To fence with broomsticks, I should rather suppose," said the King—"Come, Doctor Rochecliffe, this sudden fit of assumed importance befits you as little as your late frolic. You are not, I apprehend, either a Catholic priest or a Scotch Mass-John to claim devoted obedience from your hearers, but a Church-of-England-man, subject to the rules of that Communion —and to its HEAD." In speaking the last words, the King lowered his voice to a low and impressive whisper. Everard observing this drew back, the natural generosity of his temper directing him to avoid overhearing private discourse, in which the safety of the speakers might be deeply concerned. They continued, however, to observe great caution in their forms of expression.

"Master Kerneguy," said the clergyman, "it is not I who assume authority or control over your wishes—God forbid; I do but tell you what reason, Scripture, religion, and morality, alike prescribe for your rule of conduct."

"And I, Doctor," said the King, smiling, and pointing to the unlucky cane, "will take your example rather than your precept. If a reverend clergyman

will himself fight a bout at single-stick, what right can he have to interfere in gentlemen's quarrels?—Come, sir, remove yourself, and do not let your present obstinacy cancel former obligations."

"Bethink yourself," said the divine,—"I can say one word which will prevent all this."

"Do it," replied the King, "and in doing so belie the whole tenor and actions of an honourable life—abandon the principles of your Church, and become a perjured traitor and an apostate, to prevent another person from discharging his duty as a gentleman! This were indeed killing your friend to prevent the risk of his running himself into danger. Let the Passive Obedience, which is so often in your mouth, and no doubt in your head, put your feet for once into motion, and step aside for ten minutes. Within that space your assistance may be needed, either as body-curer or soul-curer."

"Nay then," said Doctor Rochecliffe, "I have but one argument left."

While this conversation was carried on apart, Everard had almost forcibly detained by his own side, his follower, Wildrake, whose greater curiosity, and lesser delicacy, would otherwise have thrust him forward, to get, if possible, into the secret. But when he saw the Doctor turn into the coppice, he whispered eagerly to Everard—"A gold Carolus to a commonwealth farthing, the Doctor has not only come to preach a peace, but has brought the principal conditions along with him!"

Everard made no answer; he had already unsheathed his sword; and Charles hardly saw Rochecliffe's back fairly turned, than he lost no time in following his example. But, ere they had done more than salute each other, with the usual courteous flourish of their weapons, Doctor Rochecliffe again stood between them, leading in his hand Alice Lee, her garments dank with dew, and her long hair heavy with moisture, and totally uncurled. Her face was extremely pale, but it was the paleness of desperate resolution, not of fear. There was a dead pause of astonishment —the combatants rested on their swords—and even the forwardness of Wildrake only vented itself in half-suppressed ejaculations, as, "Well done, Doctor—this beats the 'parson among the pease'—No less than your patron's daughter—And Mistress Alice, whom I thought a very snowdrop, turned out a dog-violet after all—a Lindabrides, by heavens, and altogether one of ourselves!"

Excepting these unheeded mutterings, Alice was the first to speak.

"Master Everard," she said—"Master Kerneguy, you are surprised to see me here—Yet, why should I not tell the reason at once? Convinced that I am, however guiltlessly, the unhappy cause of your misunderstanding, I am too much interested to prevent fatal consequences to pause upon any step which may end it. —Master Kerneguy, have my wishes, my entreaties, my prayers—have your noble thoughts—the recollections of your own high duties, no weight with you in this

matter? Let me entreat you to consult reason, religion, and common sense, and return your weapon."

"I am obedient as an Eastern slave, madam," answered Charles, sheathing his sword; "but I assure you, the matter about which you distress yourself is a mere trifle, which will be much better settled betwixt Colonel Everard and myself in five minutes, than with the assistance of the whole Convocation of the Church, with a female parliament to assist their reverend deliberations.—Mr. Everard, will you oblige me by walking a little farther?—We must change ground, it seems."

"I am ready to attend you, sir," said Everard, who had sheathed his sword so soon as his antagonist did so.

"I have then no interest with you, sir," said Alice, continuing to address the King—"Do you not fear I should use the secret in my power to prevent this affair going to extremity? Think you this gentleman, who raises his hand against you, if he knew——"

"If he knew that I were Lord Wilmot, madam, you would say?—Accident has given him proof to that effect, with which he is already satisfied, and I think you would find it difficult to induce him to embrace a different opinion."

Alice paused, and looked on the King with great indignation, the following words dropping from her mouth by intervals, as if they burst forth one by one in spite of feelings that would have restrained them—"Cold—selfish—ungrateful—unkind!—Wo to the land which——" Here she paused with marked

emphasis, then added—"which shall number thee, or such as thee, among her nobles and rulers!"

"Nay, fair Alice," said Charles, whose good-nature could not but feel the severity of this reproach, though too slightly to make all the desired impression, "You are too unjust to me—too partial to a happier man. Do not call me unkind; I am but here to answer Mr. Everard's summons. I could neither decline attending, nor withdraw now I am here, without loss of honour; and my loss of honour would be a disgrace which must extend to many—I cannot fly from Mr. Everard—it would be too shameful. If he abides by his message, it must be decided as such affairs usually are. If he retreats or yields it up, I will, for your sake, wave punctilio. I will not even ask an apology for the trouble it has afforded me, but let all pass as if it were the consequence of some unhappy mistake, the grounds of which shall remain on my part uninquired into.—This I will do for your sake, and it is much for a man of honour to condescend so far—You *know* that the condescension from me in particular is great indeed. Then do not call me ungenerous, or ungrateful, or unkind, since I am ready to do all, which, as a man, I can do, and more perhaps, than as a man of honour I ought to do."

"Do you hear this, Markham Everard," exclaimed Alice—"do you hear this?—the dreadful option is left entirely at your disposal. You were wont to be temperate in passion, religious, forgiving—will you for a mere punctilio, drive on this private and unchristian

broil to a murderous extremity? Believe me if you *now*, contrary to all the better principles of your life, give the reins to your passions, the consequences may be such as you will rue for your lifetime, and even, if Heaven have not mercy, rue after your life is finished."

Markham Everard remained for a moment gloomily silent, with his eyes fixed on the ground. At length he looked up, and answered her—"Alice, you are a soldier's daughter—a soldier's sister. All your relations, even including one whom you then entertained some regard for, have been made soldiers by these unhappy discords. Yet you have seen them take the field—in some instances on contrary sides, to do their duty where their principles called them, without manifesting this extreme degree of interest. Answer me—and your answer shall decide my conduct—Is this youth, so short while known, already of more value to you than those dear connections, father, brother, and kinsman, whose departure to battle you saw with comparative indifference?—Say *this*, and it shall be enough—I leave the ground, never to see you or this country again."

"Stay, Markham, stay; and believe me when I say, that if I answer your question in the affirmative, it is because Master Kerneguy's safety comprehends more, much more, than that of any of those you have mentioned."

"Indeed! I did not know a coronet had been so superior in value to the crest of a private gentleman," said Everard; "yet I have heard that many women think so."

"You apprehend me amiss," said Alice, perplexed between the difficulty of so expressing herself as to prevent immediate mischief, and at the same time anxious to combat the jealousy and disarm the resentment which she saw arising in the bosom of her lover. But she found no words fine enough to draw the distinction, without leading to a discovery of the King's actual character, and perhaps, in consequence, to his destruction. "Markham," she said, "have compassion on me. Press me not at this moment—believe me, the honour and happiness of my father, of my brother, and of my whole family, are interested in Master Kerneguy's safety—are inextricably concerned in this matter resting where it now does."

"Oh, ay—I doubt not," said Everard; "the House of Lee ever looked up to nobility, and valued in their connections the fantastic loyalty of a courtier beyond the sterling and honest patriotism of a plain country gentleman. For them, the thing is in course. But on your part, you, Alice—Oh! on your part, whom I have loved so dearly—who has suffered me to think that my affection was not unrepaid—Can the attractions of an empty title, the idle court compliments of a mere man of quality, during only a few hours, lead you to prefer a libertine lord to such a heart as mine?"

"No, no—believe me, no," said Alice, in the extremity of distress.

"Put your answer, which seems so painful, in one word, and say for *whose* safety it is you are thus deeply interested?"

"For both—for both," said Alice.

"That answer will not serve, Alice," answered Everard—"here is no room for equality. I must and will know to what I have to trust. I understand not the paltering, which makes a maiden unwilling to decide betwixt two suitors; nor would I willingly impute to *you* the vanity that cannot remain contented with one lover at once."

The vehemence of Everard's displeasure, when he supposed his own long and sincere devotion lightly forgotten, amid the addresses of a profligate courtier, awakened the spirit of Alice Lee, who, as we elsewhere said, had a portion in her temper of the lion-humour that was characteristic of her family.

"If I am thus misinterpreted," she said—"If I am not judged worthy of the least confidence or candid construction, hear my declaration, and my assurance, that, strange as my words may seem, they are, when truly interpreted, such as do you no wrong.—I tell you —I tell all present—and I tell this gentleman himself, who well knows the sense in which I speak, that his life and safety are, or ought to be, of more value to me than those of any other man in the kingdom—nay, in the world, be that other who he will."

These words she spoke in a tone so firm and decided, as admitted no farther discussion. Charles bowed low and with gravity, but remained silent. Everard, his features agitated by the emotions which his pride barely enabled him to suppress, advanced to his antagonist, and said, in a tone which he vainly endeavoured to

make a firm one, "Sir, you heard the lady's declaration, with such feelings, doubtless, of gratitude as the case eminently demands.—As her poor kinsman, and an unworthy suitor, sir, I presume to yield my interest in her to you; and, as I will never be the means of giving her pain, I trust you will not think I act unworthily in retracting the letter which gave you the trouble of attending this place at this hour.—Alice," he said, turning his head towards her, "Farewell Alice, at once and for ever!"

The poor young lady, whose adventitious spirit had almost deserted her, attempted to repeat the word farewell, but failing in the attempt, only accomplished a broken and imperfect sound, and would have sunk to the ground, but for Doctor Rochecliffe, who caught her as she fell. Roger Wildrake, also, who had twice or thrice put to his eyes what remained of a kerchief, interested by the lady's evident distress, though unable to comprehend the mysterious cause, hastened to assist the divine in supporting so fair a burden.

Meanwhile, the disguised Prince had beheld the whole in silence, but with an agitation to which he was unwonted, and which his swarthy features, and still more his motions, began to betray. His posture was at first absolutely stationary, with his arms folded on his bosom, as one who waits to be guided by the current of events; presently after, he shifted his position, advanced and retired his foot, clenched and opened his hand, and otherwise shewed symptoms that he was strongly agitated by contending feelings,—was on the

point, too, of forming some sudden resolution, and yet still in uncertainty what course he should pursue.

But when he saw Markham Everard, after one look of unspeakable anguish towards Alice, turning his back to depart, he broke out into his familiar ejaculation, "Oddsfish! this must not be." In three strides he overtook the slowly retiring Everard, tapped him smartly on the shoulder, and, as he turned round, said, with an air of command, which he well knew how to adopt at pleasure, "One word with you, sir."

"At your pleasure, sir," replied Everard, and naturally conjecturing the purpose of his antagonist to be hostile, took hold of his rapier with the left hand, and laid the right on the hilt, not displeased at the supposed call; for anger is at least as much akin to disappointment as pity is said to be to love.

"Pshaw!" answered the King, "that cannot be *now*—Colonel Everard, I am CHARLES STUART!"

Everard recoiled in the greatest surprise, and next exclaimed, "Impossible—it cannot be!—The King of Scots has escaped from Bristol.—My Lord Wilmot, your talents for intrigue are well known—but this will not pass upon me."

"The King of Scots, Master Everard," replied Charles—"since you are so pleased to limit his sovereignty—at any rate, the Eldest Son of the late Sovereign of Britain,—is now before you; therefore it is impossible he could have escaped from Bristol. Doctor Rochecliffe shall be my voucher, and will tell you, moreover, that Wilmot is of a fair complexion,

and light hair—mine, you may see, is swart as a raven."

Rochecliffe, seeing what was passing, abandoned Alice to the care of Wildrake, whose extreme delicacy in the attempts he made to bring her back to life, formed an amiable contrast to his usual wildness, and occupied him so much, that he remained for the moment ignorant of the disclosure in which he would have been so much interested. As for Dr. Rochecliffe, he came forward, wringing his hands in all the demonstration of extreme anxiety, and with the usual exclamations attending such a state."

"Peace, Doctor Rochecliffe!" said the King, with such complete self-possession as indeed became a prince —"We are in the hands, I am satisfied, of a man of honour. Master Everard must be pleased in finding only a fugitive prince in the person in whom he thought he had discovered a successful rival. He cannot but be aware of the feelings which prevented me from taking advantage of the cover which this young lady's devoted loyalty afforded me, at the risk of her own happiness. He is the party who is to profit by my candour; and certainly I have a right to expect that my condition, already indifferent enough, shall not be rendered worse by his becoming privy to it, under such circumstances. At any rate, the avowal is made; and it is for Colonel Everard to consider how he is to conduct himself."

"Oh, your Majesty! my Liege! my King! my royal Prince!" exclaimed Wildrake, who, at length

discovering what was passing, had crawled on his knees, and seizing the King's hand, was kissing it, more like a child mumbling gingerbread, or like a lover devouring the yielded hand of his mistress, than in the manner in which such salutations pass at court—"If my dear friend Mark Everard should prove a dog on this occasion, rely on me I will cut his throat on the spot, were I to do the same for myself the moment afterwards!"

"Hush, hush, my good friend and loyal subject," said the King, "and compose yourself; for though I am obliged to put on the Prince for a moment, we have not privacy or safety to receive our subjects in King Cambyses' vein."

Everard, who had stood for a time utterly confounded, awoke at length like a man from a dream.

"Sire," he said, bowing low, and with profound deference, "if I do not offer you the homage of a subject with knee and sword, it is because God, by whom kings reign, has denied you for the present the power of ascending your throne without rekindling civil war. For your safety being endangered by me, let not such an imagination for an instant cross your mind. Had I not respected your person—were I not bound to you for the candour with which your noble avowal has prevented the misery of my future life, your misfortunes would have rendered your person as sacred, so far as I can protect it, as it could be esteemed by the most devoted royalist in the kingdom. If your plans are soundly considered, and securely laid, think that all which is now passed is but a dream. If they are in

such a state that I can aid them, saving my duty to the Commonwealth, which will permit me to be privy to no schemes of actual violence, your Majesty may command my services."

"It may be I may be troublesome to you sir," said the King; "for my fortunes are not such as to permit me to reject even the most limited offers of assistance; but if I can, I will dispense with applying to you. I would not willingly put any man's compassion at war with his sense of duty on my account.—Doctor, I think there will be no farther tilting to-day, either with sword or cane; so we may as well return to the Lodge, and leave these"—looking at Alice and Everard—"who may have more to say in explanation."

"No—no!" exclaimed Alice, who was now perfectly come to herself, and partly by her own observation, and partly from the report of Dr. Rochecliffe, comprehended all that had taken place—"My cousin Everard and I have nothing to explain; he will forgive me for having riddled with him when I dared not speak plainly; and I forgive him for having read my riddle wrong. But my father has my promise—we must not correspond or converse for the present—I return instantly to the Lodge and he to Woodstock, unless you, sire," bowing to the King, "command his duty otherwise.—Instant to the town, Cousin Markham; and if danger should approach, give us warning."

Everard would have delayed her departure, would have excused himself for his unjust suspicion, would have said a thousand things; but she would not listen

to him, saying, for all other answer,—"Farewell, Markham, till God send better days!"

"She is an angel of truth and beauty," said Roger Wildrake; "and I, like a blasphemous heretic, called her a Lindabrides!*—But has your Majesty—craving your pardon—no commands for poor Hodge Wildrake, who will blow out his own or any other man's brains in England, to do your Grace a pleasure?"

"We entreat our good friend Wildrake to do nothing hastily," said Charles, smiling; "such brains as his are rare, and should not be rashly dispersed, as the like may not be easily collected. We recommend him to be silent and prudent—to tilt no more with loyal clergymen of the Church of England, and to get himself a new jacket with all convenient speed, to which we beg to contribute our royal aid. When fit time comes, we hope to find other service for him."

As he spoke, he slid ten pieces into the hand of poor Wildrake, who, confounded with the excess of his loyal gratitude, blubbered like a child, and would have followed the King, had not Doctor Rochecliffe, in few words, but peremptory, insisted that he should return with his patron, promising him he should certainly be employed in assisting the King's escape, could an opportunity be found of using his services.

"Be so generous, reverend sir, and you bind me to you for ever," said the cavalier; "and I conjure you not to keep malice against me on account of the foolery you wot of."

* A sort of court name for a female of no reputation.

"I have no occasion, Captain Wildrake," said the Doctor, "for I think I had the best of it."

"Well, then, Doctor, I forgive you on my part; and I pray you, for Christian charity, let me have a finger in this good service; for as I live in hope of it, rely that I shall die of disappointment."

While the Doctor and soldier thus spoke together, Charles took leave of Everard (who remained uncovered while he spoke to him) with his usual grace—"I need not bid you no longer be jealous of me," said the King; "for I presume you will scarce think of a match betwixt Alice and me, which would be too losing a one on her side. For other thoughts, the wildest libertine could not entertain them towards so high-minded a creature; and believe me, that my sense of her merit did not need this last distinguished proof of her truth and loyalty. I saw enough of her from her answers to some idle sallies of gallantry, to know with what a lofty character she is endowed. Mr. Everard, her happiness I see depends on you, and I trust you will be the careful guardian of it. If we can take any obstacle out of the way of your joint happiness, be assured we will use our influence.—Farewell, sir; if we cannot be better friends, do not at least let us entertain harder or worse thoughts of each other than we have now."

There was something in the manner of Charles that was extremely affecting; something, too, in his condition as a fugitive in the kingdom which was his own by inheritance, that made a direct appeal to Everard's bosom—though in contradiction to the dictates of that

policy which he judged it his duty to pursue in the distracted circumstances of the country. He remained, as we have said, uncovered; and in his manner testified the highest expression of reverence, up to the point when such might seem a symbol of allegiance. He bowed so low as almost to approach his lips to the hand of Charles—but he did not kiss it.—"I would rescue your person, sir," he said, "with the purchase of my own life. More"—— He stopped short, and the King took up his sentence where it broke off—"More you cannot do," said Charles, "to maintain an honourable consistency—but what you have said is enough. You cannot render homage to my proffered hand as that of a sovereign, but you will not prevent my taking yours as a friend, if you allow me to call myself so—I am sure, as a well-wisher at least."

The generous soul of Everard was touched—He took the King's hand, and pressed it to his lips.

"Oh!" he said, "were better times to come"——

"Bind yourself to nothing, dear Everard," said the good-natured Prince, partaking his emotion—"We reason ill while our feelings are moved. I will recruit no man to his loss, nor will I have my fallen fortunes involve those of others, because they have humanity enough to pity my present condition. If better times come, why we will meet again, and I hope to our mutual satisfaction. If not, as your future father-in-law would say" (a benevolent smile came over his face, and accorded not unmeetly with his glistening eyes)—"If not, this parting was well made."

Everard turned away with a deep bow, almost choking under contending feelings; the uppermost of which was a sense of the generosity with which Charles, at his own imminent risk, had cleared away the darkness that seemed about to overwhelm his prospects of happiness for life—mixed with a deep sense of the perils by which he was environed. He returned to the little town, followed by his attendant Wildrake, who turned back so often, with weeping eyes, and hands clasped and uplifted as supplicating Heaven, that Everard was obliged to remind him that his gestures might be observed by some one, and occasion suspicion.

The generous conduct of the King during the closing part of this remarkable scene, had not escaped Alice's notice; and, erasing at once from her mind all resentment of Charles's former conduct, and all the suspicions they had deservedly excited, awakened in her bosom a sense of the natural goodness of his disposition, which permitted her to unite regard for his person, with that reverence for his high office in which she had been educated as a portion of her creed. She felt convinced, and delighted with the conviction, that his virtues were his own, his libertinism the fault of education, or rather want of education, and the corrupting advice of sycophants and flatterers. She could not know, or perhaps did not in that moment consider, that in a soil where no care is taken to eradicate tares, they will outgrow and smother the wholesome seed, even if the last is more natural to the soil. For, as Doctor Rochecliffe informed her afterwards for

her edification,—promising, as was his custom, to explain the precise words on some future occasion if she would put him in mind—*Virtus rectorem ducemque desiderat; Vitia sine magistro discuntur.**

There was no room for such reflections at present. Conscious of mutual sincerity, by a sort of intellectual communication, through which individuals are led to understand each other better, perhaps, in delicate circumstances, than by words, reserve and simulation appeared to be now banished from the intercourse between the King and Alice. With manly frankness, and, at the same time, with princely condescension, he requested her, exhausted as she was, to accept of his arm on the way homeward, instead of that of Doctor Rochecliffe, and Alice accepted of his support with modest humility, but without a shadow of mistrust or fear. It seemed as if the last half hour had satisfied them perfectly with the character of each other, and that each had full conviction of the purity and sincerity of the other's intentions.

Doctor Rochecliffe, in the meantime, had fallen some four or five paces behind; for, less light and

* The quotations of the learned doctor and antiquary were often left uninterpreted, though seldom uncommunicated, owing to his contempt for those who did not understand the learned languages, and his dislike to the labour of translation, for the benefit of ladies and of country gentlemen. That fair readers and country thanes may not on this occasion burst in ignorance, we add the meaning of the passage in the text—"*Virtue requires the aid of a governor and director; vices are learned without a teacher.*"

active than Alice (who had, besides, the assistance of the King's support), he was unable, without effort and difficulty, to keep up with the pace of Charles, who then was, as we have elsewhere noticed, one of the best walkers in England, and was sometimes apt to forget (as great men will) that others were inferior to him in activity.

"Dear Alice," said the King, but as if the epithet were entirely fraternal, "I like your Everard much—I would to God he were of our determination—But since that cannot be, I am sure he will prove a generous enemy."

"May it please you, sire," said Alice, modestly, but with some firmness, "my cousin will never be your Majesty's personal enemy—and he is one of the few on whose slightest word you may rely more than on the oath of those who profess more strongly and formally. He is utterly incapable of abusing your Majesty's most generous and voluntary confidence."

"On my honour, I believe so, Alice," replied the King: "But oddsfish! my girl, let Majesty sleep for the present—it concerns my safety, as I told your brother lately—Call me sir, then, which belongs alike to king, peer, knight, and gentleman—or rather let me be wild Louis Kerneguy again."

Alice looked down, and shook her head. "That cannot be, please your Majesty."

"What! Louis was a saucy companion—a naughty presuming boy—and you cannot abide him?—Well, perhaps you are right—But we will wait for Doctor

Rochecliffe"—he said, desirous, with good-natured delicacy, to make Alice aware that he had no purpose of engaging her in any discussion which could recall painful ideas. They paused accordingly, and again she felt relieved and grateful.

"I cannot persuade our fair friend, Mistress Alice, Doctor," said the King, "that she must, in prudence, forbear using titles of respect to me, while there are such very slender means of sustaining them."

"It is a reproach to earth and to fortune," answered the divine, as fast as his recovered breath would permit him, "that your most sacred Majesty's present condition should not accord with the rendering of those honours which are your own by birth, and which, with God's blessing on the efforts of your loyal subjects, I hope to see rendered to you as your hereditary right, by the universal voice of the three kingdoms."

"True, Doctor," replied the King; "but, in the meanwhile, can you expound to Mistress Alice Lee two lines of Horace, which I have carried in my thick head several years, till now, they have come pat to my purpose. As my canny subjects of Scotland say, If you keep a thing seven years, you are sure to find a use for it at last—*Telephus*—ay, so it begins—

> *Telephus et Peleus, cum pauper et exul uterque,*
> *Projicit ampullas et sesquipedalia verba.*"

"I will explain the passage to Mistress Alice," said the Doctor, "when she reminds me of it—or rather" (he added, recollecting that his ordinary dilatory answer on such occasions ought not to be returned when the

order for exposition emanated from his sovereign), "I will repeat a poor couplet from my own translation of the poem—

> Heroes and kings, in exile forced to roam,
> Leave swelling phrase and seven-leagued words at home."

"A most admirable version, Doctor," said Charles; "I feel all its force, and particularly the beautiful rendering of *sesquipedalia verba* into seven-leagued boots—words I mean—it reminds me, like half the things I meet with in this world, of the *Contes de Commère L'Oye.*"*

Thus conversing they reached the Lodge; and as the King went to his chamber to prepare for the breakfast summons, now impending, the idea crossed his mind, "Wilmot, and Villiers, and Killigrew, would laugh at me, did they hear of a campaign in which neither man nor woman had been conquered—But, oddsfish! let them laugh as they will, there is something at my heart which tells me, that for once in my life I have acted well."

That day and the next were spent in tranquillity, the King waiting impatiently for the intelligence, which was to announce to him that a vessel was prepared somewhere on the coast. None such was yet in readiness; but he learned that the indefatigable Albert Lee was, at great personal risk, traversing the seacoast from town to village, and endeavouring to find means of embarkation among the friends of the royal cause, and the correspondents of Doctor Rochecliffe.

* Tales of Mother Goose.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-NINTH.

> Ruffian, let go that rude uncivil touch!
> TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA.

IT is time we should give some account of the other actors in our drama, the interest due to the principal personages having for some time engrossed our attention exclusively.

We are, therefore, to inform the reader, that the lingering longings of the Commissioners, who had been driven forth of their proposed paradise of Woodstock, not by a cherub indeed, but, as they thought, by spirits of another sort, still detained them in the vicinity. They had, indeed, left the little borough under pretence of indifferent accommodation. The more palpable reasons were, that they entertained some resentment against Everard, as the means of their disappointment, and had no mind to reside where their proceedings could be overlooked by him, although they took leave in terms of the utmost respect. They went, however, no farther than Oxford, and remained there, as ravens, who are accustomed to witness the chase, sit upon a tree or crag,

at a little distance, and watch the disembowelling of the deer, expecting the relics which fall to their share. Meantime, the University and City, but especially the former, supplied them with some means of employing their various faculties to advantage, until the expected moment, when, as they hoped, they should either be summoned to Windsor, or Woodstock should once more be abandoned to their discretion.

Bletson, to pass the time, vexed the souls of such learned and pious divines and scholars, as he could intrude his hateful presence upon, by sophistry, atheistical discourse, and challenges to them to impugn the most scandalous theses. Desborough, one of the most brutally ignorant men of the period, got himself nominated the head of a college and lost no time in cutting down trees, and plundering plate. As for Harrison, he preached in full uniform in Saint Mary's Church, wearing his buff-coat, boots, and spurs, as if he were about to take the field for the fight at Armageddon. And it was hard to say, whether that seat of Learning, Religion, and Loyalty, as it is called by Clarendon, was more vexed by the rapine of Desborough, the cold scepticism of Bletson, or the frantic enthusiasm of the Fifth-Monarchy Champion.

Ever and anon, soldiers, under pretence of relieving guard, or otherwise, went and came betwixt Woodstock and Oxford, and maintained, it may be supposed, a correspondence with Trusty Tomkins, who, though he chiefly resided in the town of Woodstock, visited the Lodge occasionally, and to whom, therefore, they

doubtless trusted for information concerning the proceedings there.

Indeed, this man Tomkins seemed by some secret means to have gained the confidence in part, if not in whole, of almost every one connected with these intrigues. All closeted him, all conversed with him in private; those who had the means propitiated him with gifts, those who had not were liberal of promises. When he chanced to appear at Woodstock, which always seemed as it were by accident—if he passed through the hall, the knight was sure to ask him to take the foils, and was equally certain to be, after less or more resistance, victorious in the encounter; so, in consideration of so many triumphs, the good Sir Henry almost forgave him the sins of rebellion and puritanism. Then, if his slow and formal step was heard in the passages approaching the gallery, Doctor Rochecliffe, though he never introduced him to his peculiar boudoir, was sure to meet Master Tomkins in some neutral apartment, and to engage him in long conversations, which apparently had great interest for both.

Neither was the Independent's reception below stairs less gracious than above. Joceline failed not to welcome him with the most cordial frankness; the pasty and the flagon were put in immediate requisition, and good cheer was the general word. The means for this, it may be observed, had grown more plenty at Woodstock since the arrival of Doctor Rochecliffe, who, in quality of agent for several royalists, had various sums of money at his disposal. By these funds it is

likely that Trusty Tomkins also derived his own full advantage.

In his occasional indulgence in what he called a fleshly frailty (and for which he said he had a privilege), which was in truth an attachment to strong liquors, and that in no moderate degree, his language, at other times remarkably decorous and reserved, became wild and animated. He sometimes talked with all the unction of an old debauchee, of former exploits, such as deer-stealing, orchard-robbing, drunken gambols, and desperate affrays in which he had been engaged in the earlier part of his life, sung bacchanalian and amorous ditties, dwelt sometimes upon adventures which drove Phœbe Mayflower from the company, and penetrated even the deaf ears of Dame Jellicot, so as to make the buttery in which he held his carousals no proper place for the poor old woman.

In the middle of these wild rants, Tomkins twice or thrice suddenly ran into religious topics, and spoke mysteriously, but with great animation, and a rich eloquence, on the happy and pre-eminent saints, who were saints, as he termed them, indeed—Men who had stormed the inner treasure-house of Heaven, and possessed themselves of its choicest jewels. All other sects he treated with the utmost contempt, as merely quarrelling, as he expressed it, like hogs over a trough about husks and acorns; under which derogatory terms, he included alike the usual rites and ceremonies of public devotion, the ordinances of the established churches of Christianity, and the observances, nay, the

forbearances, enjoined by every class of Christians. Scarcely hearing, and not at all understanding him, Joceline, who seemed his most frequent confidant on such occasions, generally led him back into some strain of rude mirth, or old recollection of follies before the Civil Wars, without caring about or endeavouring to analyze the opinion of this saint of an evil fashion, but fully sensible of the protection which his presence afforded at Woodstock, and confident in the honest meaning of so free-spoken a fellow, to whom ale and brandy, when better liquor was not to be come by, seemed to be principal objects of life, and who drank a health to the King, or any one else, whenever required, provided the cup in which he was to perform the libation were but a brimmer.

These peculiar doctrines, which were entertained by a sect sometimes termed the Family of Love, but more commonly Ranters,* had made some progress in times when such variety of religious opinions were prevalent, that men pushed the jarring heresies to the verge of absolute and most impious insanity. Secrecy had been enjoined on these frantic believers in a most blasphemous doctrine, by the fear of consequences, should they

* The Familists were originally founded by David George of Delft, an enthusiast, who believed himself the Messiah. They branched off into various sects of Grindletonians, Familists of the Mountains, of the Valleys; Familists of Cape Order, etc. etc., of the Scattered Flock, etc. etc. Among doctrines, too wild and foul to be quoted, they held the lawfulness of occasional conformity with any predominant sect when it suited their convenience, of complying with the order of any magistrate, or

come to be generally announced; and it was the care of Master Tomkins to conceal the spiritual freedom which he pretended to have acquired, from all whose resentment would have been stirred by his public avowal of it. This was not difficult; for their profession of faith permitted, nay, required, their occasional conformity with the sectaries or professors of any creed which chanced to be uppermost.

Tomkins had accordingly the art to pass himself on Dr. Rochecliffe as still a zealous member of the Church of England, though serving under the enemy's colours, as a spy in their camp; and as he had on several times given him true and valuable intelligence, this active intriguer was the more easily induced to believe his professions.

Nevertheless, lest this person's occasional presence at the Lodge, which there were perhaps no means to prevent without exciting suspicion, should infer danger to the King's person, Rochecliffe, whatever confidence he otherwise reposed in him, recommended that, if possible, the King should keep always out of his sight, and when accidentally discovered, that he should only appear in the character of Louis Kerneguy. Joseph

superior power, however sinful. They disowned the principal doctrines of Christianity, as a law which had been superseded by the advent of David George—nay, obeyed the wildest and loosest dictates of evil passions, and are said to have practised among themselves the grossest libertinism. See Edward's *Gangræna*, Pagitt's *Heresiographia*, and a very curious work written by Ludovic Claxton, one of the leaders of the sect, called the *Lost Sheep Found*,—Small quarto, London, 1660.

Tomkins, he said, was, he really believed, Honest Joe; but Honesty was a horse which might be overburdened, and there was no use in leading our neighbour into temptation.

It seemed as if Tomkins himself had acquiesced in this limitation of confidence exercised towards him, or that he wished to seem blinder than he really was to the presence of this stranger in the family. It occurred to Joceline, who was a very shrewd fellow, that once or twice, when by inevitable accident Tomkins had met Kerneguy, he seemed less interested in the circumstance than he would have expected from the man's disposition, which was naturally prying and inquisitive. "He asked no questions about the young stranger," said Joceline. "God avert that he knows or suspects too much!" But his suspicions were removed, when, in the course of their subsequent conversation, Joseph Tomkins mentioned the King's escape from Bristol as a thing positively certain, and named both the vessel in which he said he had gone off, and the master who commanded her, seeming so convinced of the truth of the report, that Joceline judged it impossible he could have the slightest suspicion of the reality.

Yet, notwithstanding this persuasion, and the comradeship which had been established between them, the faithful under-keeper resolved to maintain a strict watch over his gossip Tomkins, and be in readiness to give the alarm should occasion arise. True, he thought, he had reason to believe that his said friend, notwith-

standing his drunken and enthusiastic rants, was as trustworthy as he was esteemed by Doctor Rochecliffe; yet still he was an adventurer, the outside and lining of whose cloak were of different colours, and a high reward, and pardon for past acts of malignancy, might tempt him once more to turn his tippet—For these reasons Joceline kept a strict, though unostentatious watch over Trusty Tomkins.

We have said, that the discreet seneschal was universally well received at Woodstock, whether in the borough or at the Lodge, and that even Joceline Joliffe was anxious to conceal any suspicions which he could not altogether repress, under a great show of cordial hospitality. There were, however, two individuals, who, for very different reasons, nourished personal dislike against the individual so generally acceptable.

One was Nehemiah Holdenough, who remembered, with great bitterness of spirit, the Independent's violent intrusion into his pulpit, and who ever spoke of him in private as a lying missionary, into whom Satan had put a spirit of delusion; and preached, besides, a solemn sermon on the subject of the false prophet, out of whose mouth came frogs. The discourse was highly prized by the Mayor and most of the better class, who conceived that their minister had struck a heavy blow at the very root of Independency. On the other hand, those of the private spirit contended, that Joseph Tomkins had made a successful and triumphant rally, in an exhortation on the evening of the same day, in which he proved, to the conviction of many handicraftsmen,

that the passage in Jeremiah, "The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means," was directly applicable to the Presbyterian system of church government. The clergyman despatched an account of his adversary's conduct to the Reverend Master Edwards, to be inserted in the next edition of Gangræna, as a pestilent heretic; and Tomkins recommended the parson to his master, Desborough, as a good subject on whom to impose a round fine, for vexing the private spirit; assuring him, at the same time, that though the minister might seem poor, yet if a few troopers were quartered on him till the fine was paid, every rich shopkeeper's wife in the borough would rob the till, rather than go without the mammon of unrighteousness with which to redeem their priest from sufferance; holding, according to his expression, with Laban, "You have taken from me my gods, and what have I more?" There was, of course, little cordiality between the polemical disputants, when religious debate took so worldly a turn.

But Joe Tomkins was much more concerned at the evil opinion which seemed to be entertained against him, by one whose good graces he was greatly more desirous to obtain than those of Nehemiah Holdenough. This was no other than pretty Mistress Phœbe Mayflower, for whose conversion he had felt a strong vocation, ever since his lecture upon Shakspeare on their first meeting at the Lodge. He seemed desirous, however, to carry on this more serious work in private, and especially to conceal his labours from his friend Joceline

Joliffe, lest, perchance, he had been addicted to jealousy. But it was in vain that he plied the faithful damsel, sometimes with verses from the Canticles, sometimes with quotations from Green's Arcadia, or pithy passages from Venus and Adonis, and doctrines of a nature yet more abstruse, from the popular work entitled Aristotle's Masterpiece. Unto no wooing of his, sacred or profane, metaphysical or physical, would Phœbe Mayflower seriously incline.

The maiden loved Joceline Joliffe, on the one hand; and, on the other, if she disliked Joseph Tomkins when she first saw him, as a rebellious puritan, she had not been at all reconciled by finding reason to regard him as a hypocritical libertine. She hated him in both capacities—never endured his conversation when she could escape from it—and when obliged to remain, listened to him only because she knew he had been so deeply trusted, that to offend him might endanger the security of the family, in the service of which she had been born and bred up, and to whose interest she was devoted. For reasons somewhat similar, she did not suffer her dislike of the steward to become manifest before Joceline Joliffe, whose spirit, as a forester and a soldier, might have been likely to bring matters to an arbitrement, in which the *couteau de chasse* and quarter-staff of her favourite, would have been too unequally matched with the long rapier and pistols which his dangerous rival always carried about his person. But it is difficult to blind jealousy when there is any cause of doubt; and perhaps the sharp watch maintained by

Joceline on his comrade, was prompted not only by his zeal for the King's safety, but by some vague suspicion that Tomkins was not ill disposed to poach upon his own fair manor.

Phœbe, in the meanwhile, like a prudent girl, sheltered herself as much as possible by the presence of Goody Jellicot. Then, indeed, it is true the Independent, or whatever he was, used to follow her with his addresses to very little purpose; for Phœbe seemed as deaf, through wilfulness, as the old matron by natural infirmity. This indifference highly incensed her new lover, and induced him anxiously to watch for a time and place, in which he might plead his suit with an energy that should command attention. Fortune, that malicious goddess, who so often ruins us by granting the very object of our vows, did at length procure him such an opportunity as he had long coveted.

It was about sunset, or shortly after, when Phœbe, upon whose activity much of the domestic arrangements depended, went as far as fair Rosamond's spring to obtain water for the evening meal, or rather to gratify the prejudice of the old knight, who believed that celebrated fountain afforded the choicest supplies of the necessary element. Such was the respect in which he was held by his whole family, that to neglect any of his wishes that could be gratified, though with inconvenience to themselves, would, in their estimation, have been almost equal to a breach of religious duty.

To fill the pitcher had, we know, been of late a troublesome task; but Joceline's ingenuity had so far

rendered it easy, by repairing rudely a part of the ruined front of the ancient fountain, that the water was collected, and trickling along a wooden spout, dropped from a height of about two feet. A damsel was thereby enabled to place her pitcher under the slowly dropping supply, and without toil to herself, might wait till her vessel was filled.

Phœbe Mayflower, on the evening we allude to, saw, for the first time, this little improvement; and, justly considering it as a piece of gallantry of her silvan admirer, designed to save her the trouble of performing her task in a more inconvenient manner, she gratefully employed the minutes of ease which the contrivance procured her, in reflecting on the good nature and ingenuity of the obliging engineer, and perhaps in thinking he might have done as wisely to have waited till she came to the fountain, that he might have secured personal thanks for the trouble he had taken. But then she knew he was detained in the buttery with that odious Tomkins, and rather than have seen the Independent along with him, she would have renounced the thought of meeting Joceline.

As she was thus reflecting, Fortune was malicious enough to send Tomkins to the fountain, and without Joceline. When she saw his figure darken the path up which he came, an anxious reflection came over the poor maiden's breast, that she was alone, and within the verge of the forest, where in general persons were prohibited to come during the twilight, for disturbing the deer settling to their repose. She encouraged her-

self, however, and resolved to shew no sense of fear, although, as the steward approached, there was something in the man's look and eye no way calculated to allay her apprehensions.

"The blessings of the evening upon you, my pretty maiden," he said. "I meet you even as the chief servant of Abraham, who was a steward like myself, met Rebecca, the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Milcah, at the well of the city of Nahor, in Mesopotamia. Shall I not, therefore, say to you, set down thy pitcher that I may drink?"

"The pitcher is at your service, Master Tomkins," she replied, "and you may drink as much as you will; but you have, I warrant, drank better liquor, and that not long since."

It was, indeed, obvious that the steward had arisen from a revel, for his features were somewhat flushed, though he had stopped far short of intoxication. But Phœbe's alarm at his first appearance was rather increased when she observed how he had been lately employed.

"I do but use my privilege, my pretty Rebecca; the earth is given to the saints, and the fulness thereof. They shall occupy and enjoy it, both the riches of the mine, and the treasures of the vine; and they shall rejoice, and their hearts be merry within them. Thou hast yet to learn the privileges of the saints, my Rebecca."

"My name is Phœbe," said the maiden, in order to sober the enthusiastic rapture which he either felt or affected.

"Phœbe after the flesh," he said. "But Rebecca being spiritualized; for art thou not a wandering and stray sheep?—and am I not sent to fetch thee within the fold?—Wherefore else was it said, Thou shalt find her seated by the well, in the wood which is called after the ancient harlot Rosamond?"

"You have found me sitting here sure enough," said Phœbe; "but if you wish to keep me company, you must walk to the Lodge with me; and you shall carry my pitcher for me, if you will be so kind. I will hear all the good things you have to say to me as we go along. But Sir Henry calls for his glass of water regularly before prayers."

"What!" exclaimed Tomkins, "hath the old man of bloody hand and perverse heart sent thee hither to do the work of a bondswoman? Verily thou shalt return enfranchised; and for the water thou hast drawn for him, it shall be poured forth, even as David caused to be poured forth the water of the well of Bethlehem."

So saying, he emptied the water pitcher, in spite of Phœbe's exclamations and entreaties. He then replaced the vessel beneath the little conduit, and continued:—"Know that this shall be a token to thee. The filling of that pitcher shall be like the running of a sand-glass; and if within the time which shall pass ere it rises to the brim, thou shalt listen to the words which I shall say to thee, then it shall be well with thee, and thy place shall be high among those who, forsaking the instruction which is as milk for babes and sucklings, eat the strong food which nourishes

manhood. But if the pitcher shall overbrim with water ere thy ear shall hear and understand, thou shalt then be given as a prey, and as a bondsmaiden, unto those who shall possess the fat and the fair of the earth."

"You frighten me, Master Tomkins," said Phœbe, "though I am sure you do not mean to do so. I wonder how you dare speak words so like the good words in the Bible, when you know how you laughed at your own master, and all the rest of them—when you helped to play the hobgoblins at the Lodge."

"Think'st thou then, thou simple fool, that in putting that deceit upon Harrison and the rest, I exceeded my privileges?—Nay, verily. Listen to me, foolish girl. When in former days I lived the most wild, malignant rakehell in Oxfordshire, frequenting wakes and fairs, dancing around Maypoles, and shewing my lustihood at football and cudgel-playing—Yea, when I was called, in the language of the uncircumcised, Philip Hazeldine, and was one of the singers in the choir, and one of the ringers in the steeple, and served the priest yonder, by name Rochecliffe, I was not farther from the straight road than when, after long reading, I at length found one blind guide after another, all burners of bricks in Egypt. I left them one by one, the poor tool Harrison being the last; and by my own unassisted strength, I have struggled forward to the broad and blessed light, whereof thou too, Phœbe, shalt be partaker."

"I thank you, Master Tomkins," said Phœbe, suppressing some fear under an appearance of indifference;

"but I shall have light enough to carry home my pitcher, would you but let me take it; and that is all the want of light I shall have this evening."

So saying, she stooped to take the pitcher from the fountain; but he snatched hold of her by the arm, and prevented her from accomplishing her purpose. Phœbe, however, was the daughter of a bold forester, prompt at thoughts of self-defence; and though she missed getting hold of the pitcher, she caught up instead a large pebble, which she kept concealed in her right hand.

"Stand up, foolish maiden, and listen," said the Independent, sternly; "and know, in one word, that sin, for which the spirit of man is punished with the vengeance of Heaven, lieth not in the corporal act, but in the thought of the sinner. Believe, lovely Phœbe, that to the pure all acts are pure, and that sin is in our thought, not in our actions—even as the radiance of the day is dark to a blind man, but seen and enjoyed by him whose eyes receive it. To him who is but a novice in the things of the spirit, much is enjoined, much is prohibited; and he is fed with milk fit for babes,—for him are ordinances, prohibitions, and commands. But the saint is above these ordinances and restraints.—To him, as to the chosen child of the house, is given the pass-key to open all locks which withhold him from the enjoyment of his heart's desire. Into such pleasant paths will I guide thee, lovely Phœbe, as shall unite in joy, in innocent freedom, pleasures, which, to the unprivileged, are sinful and prohibited."

"I really wish, Master Tomkins, you would let me go home," said Phœbe, not comprehending the nature of his doctrine, but disliking at once his words and his manner. He went on, however, with the accursed and blasphemous doctrines, which, in common with others of the pretended saints, he had adopted, after having long shifted from one sect to another, until he settled in the vile belief, that sin, being of a character exclusively spiritual, only existed in the thoughts, and that the worst actions were permitted to those who had attained to the pitch of believing themselves above ordinance. "Thus, my Phœbe," he continued, endeavouring to draw her towards him, "I can offer thee more than ever was held out to woman since Adam first took his bride by the hand. It shall be for others to stand dry-lipped, doing penance, like papists, by abstinence, when the vessel of pleasure pours forth its delights. Dost thou love money?—I have it, and can procure more—am at liberty to procure it on every hand, and by every means—the earth is mine and its fulness. Do you desire power?—which of these poor cheated commissioner-fellows' estates dost thou covet, I will work it out for thee; for I deal with a mightier spirit than any of them. And it is not without warrant that I have aided the malignant Rochecliffe, and the clown Joliffe, to frighten and baffle them in the guise they did. Ask what thou wilt, Phœbe, I can give, or I can procure it for thee—Then enter with me into a life of delight in this world, which shall prove but an anticipation of the joys of Paradise hereafter!"

Again the fanatical voluptuary endeavoured to pull the poor girl towards him, while she, alarmed, but not scared out of her presence of mind, endeavoured by fair entreaty, to prevail on him to release her. But his features, in themselves not marked, had acquired a frightful expression, and he exclaimed, "No, Phœbe—do not think to escape—thou art given to me as a captive—thou hast neglected the hour of grace, and it has glided past—See, the water trickles over thy pitcher, which was to be a sign between us—Therefore I will urge thee no more with words, of which thou art not worthy, but treat thee as a recusant of offered grace."

"Master Tomkins," said Phœbe, in an imploring tone, "consider, for God's sake, I am a fatherless child—do me no injury, it would be a shame to your strength and your manhood—I cannot understand your fine words—I will think on them till to-morrow." Then, in rising resentment, she added more vehemently—"I will not be used rudely—stand off or I will do you a mischief." But, as he pressed upon her with a violence, of which the object could not be mistaken, and endeavoured to secure her right hand, she exclaimed, "Take it then, with a wanion to you!"—and struck him an almost stunning blow on the face, with the pebble which she held ready for such an extremity.

The fanatic let her go, and staggered backward, half stupified; while Phœbe instantly betook herself to flight, screaming for help as she ran, but still grasping the victorious pebble. Irritated to frenzy by the severe blow which he had received, Tomkins pursued, with

every black passion in his soul and in his face, mingled with fear lest his villany should be discovered. He called on Phœbe loudly to stop, and had the brutality to menace her with one of his pistols if she continued to fly. Yet she slacked not her pace for his threats, and he must either have executed them, or seen her escape to carry the tale to the Lodge, had she not unhappily stumbled over the projecting root of a fir-tree. But as he rushed upon his prey, rescue interposed in the person of Joceline Joliffe, with his quarterstaff on his shoulder. "How now? what means this?" he said, stepping between Phœbe and her pursuer. Tomkins, already roused to fury, made no other answer than by discharging at Joceline the pistol which he held in his hand. The ball grazed the under-keeper's face, who, in requital of the assault, and saying, "Aha! Let ash answer iron," applied his quarterstaff with so much force to the Independent's head, that lighting on the left temple, the blow proved almost instantly mortal.

A few convulsive struggles were accompanied with these broken words—"Joceline—I am gone—but I forgive thee—Doctor Rochecliffe—I wish I had minded more—Oh!—the clergyman—the funeral-service"—— As he uttered these words, indicative, it may be, of his return to a creed, which perhaps he had never abjured so thoroughly as he had persuaded himself, his voice was lost in a groan, which, rattling in the throat, seemed unable to find its way to the air. These were the last symptoms of life: the clenched hands presently relaxed —the closed eyes opened, and stared on the heavens a

lifeless jelly—the limbs extended themselves and stiffened. The body, which was lately animated with life, was now a lump of senseless clay—the soul, dismissed from its earthly tenement in a moment so unhallowed, was gone before the judgment-seat.

"Oh, what have you done?—what have you done, Joceline!" exclaimed Phœbe; "you have killed the man!"

"Better than he should have killed me," answered Joceline; "for he was none of the blinkers that miss their mark twice running.—And yet I am sorry for him.—Many a merry bout have we had together when he was wild Philip Hazeldine, and then he was bad enough; but since he daubed over his vices with hypocrisy, he seems to have proved worse devil than ever."

"Oh, Joceline, come away," said poor Phœbe, "and do not stand gazing on him thus;" for the woodsman, resting on his fatal weapon, stood looking down on the corpse with the appearance of a man half stunned at the event.

"This comes of the ale-pitcher," she continued, in the true style of female consolation, "as I have often told you—For Heaven's sake, come to the Lodge, and let us consult what is to be done."

"Stay first, girl, and let me drag him out of the path; we must not have him lie here in all men's sight—Will you not help me, wench?"

"I cannot, Joceline—I would not touch a lock on him for all Woodstock."

"I must to this gear myself, then," said Joceline, who, a soldier as well as a woodsman, still had great reluctance to the necessary task. Something in the face and broken words of the dying man had made a deep and terrific impression on nerves not easily shaken. He accomplished it, however, so far as to drag the late steward out of the open path, and bestow his body amongst the undergrowth of brambles and briers, so as not to be visible unless particularly looked after. He then returned to Phœbe, who had sat speechless all the while beneath the tree over whose roots she had stumbled.

"Come away, wench," he said, "come away to the Lodge, and let us study how this is to be answered for —the mishap of his being killed will strangely increase our danger.—What had he sought of thee wench, when you ran from him like a madwomen?—But I can guess—Phil was always a devil among the girls, and I think, as Doctor Rochecliffe says, that, since he turned saint, he took to himself seven devils worse than himself.—Here is the very place where I saw him, with his sword in his hand raised against the old knight, and he a child of the parish—it was high treason at least—but, by my faith, he hath paid for it at last."

"But, oh, Joceline," said Phœbe, "how could you take so wicked a man into your counsels, and join him in all his plots about scaring the roundhead gentlemen?"

"Why look thee, wench, I thought I knew him at

the first meeting, especially when Bevis, who was bred here when he was a dog-leader, would not fly at him; and when we made up our old acquaintance at the Lodge, I found he kept up a close correspondence with Dr. Rochecliffe, who was persuaded that he was a good King's man, and held consequently good intelligence with him.—The Doctor boasts to have learned much through his means; I wish to Heaven he may not have been as communicative in turn."

"Oh, Joceline," said the waiting-woman, "you should never have let him within the gate of the Lodge!"

"No more I would, if I had known how to keep him out; but when he went so frankly into our scheme, and told me how I was to dress myself like Robinson the player, whose ghost haunted Harrison—I wish no ghost may haunt me!—when he taught me how to bear myself to terrify his lawful master, what could I think, wench? I only trust the Doctor has kept the great secret of all from his knowledge.—But here we are at the Lodge. Go to thy chamber, wench and compose thyself. I must seek out Doctor Rochecliffe; he is ever talking of his quick and ready invention. Here come times, I think, that will demand it all."

Phœbe went to her chamber accordingly; but the strength arising from the pressure of danger giving way when the danger was removed, she quickly fell into a succession of hysterical fits, which required the constant attention of Dame Jellicot, and the less alarmed, but more judicious care of Mrs. Alice, before they even abated in their rapid recurrence.

The under-keeper carried his news to the politic Doctor, who was extremely disconcerted, alarmed, nay angry with Joceline, for having slain a person on whose communications he had accustomed himself to rely. Yet his looks declared his suspicion, whether his confidence had not been too rashly conferred—a suspicion which pressed him the more anxiously, that he was unwilling to avow it, as a derogation from his character for shrewdness, on which he valued himself.

Doctor Rochecliffe's reliance, however, on the fidelity of Tomkins, had apparently good grounds. Before the Civil Wars, as may be partly collected from what has been already hinted at, Tomkins under his true name of Hazeldine, had been under the protection of the Rector of Woodstock, occasionally acted as his clerk, was a distinguished member of his choir, and, being a handy and ingenious fellow, was employed in assisting the antiquarian researches of Dr. Rochecliffe through the interior of Woodstock. When he engaged in the opposite side in the Civil Wars, he still kept up his intelligence with the divine, to whom he had afforded what seemed valuable information from time to time. His assistance had latterly been eminently useful in aiding the Doctor, with the assistance of Joceline and Phœbe, in contriving and executing the various devices by which the Parliamentary Commissioners had been expelled from Woodstock. Indeed, his services in this respect had been thought worthy of no less a reward than a present of what plate remained at the Lodge, which had been promised to the Independent

accordingly. The Doctor, therefore, while admitting he might be a bad man, regretted him as a useful one, whose death, if inquired after, was likely to bring additional danger on a house which danger already surrounded, and which contained a pledge so precious.

CHAPTER THE THIRTIETH.

Cassio. That thrust had been my enemy indeed,
But that my coat is better than thou know'st.

OTHELLO.

ON the dark October night succeeding the evening on which Tomkins was slain, Colonel Everard, besides his constant attendant Roger Wildrake, had Master Nehemiah Holdenough with him as a guest at supper. The devotions of the evening having been performed according to the Presbyterian fashion, a light entertainment, and a double quart of burnt claret, were placed before his friends at nine o'clock, an hour unusually late. Master Holdenough soon engaged himself in a polemical discourse against Sectaries and Independents, without being aware that his eloquence was not very interesting to his principal hearer, whose ideas in the meanwhile wandered to Woodstock and all which it contained—the Prince, who lay concealed there—his uncle—above all, Alice Lee. As for Wildrake, after bestowing a mental curse both on Sectaries and Presbyterians as being, in his opinion, never a barrel the

better herring, he stretched out his limbs, and would probably have composed himself to rest, but that he as well as his patron had thoughts which murdered sleep.

The party were waited upon by a little gipsy-looking boy, in an orange-tawny doublet, much decayed, and garnished with blue worsted lace. The rogue looked somewhat stinted in size, but active both in intelligence and in limb as his black eyes seemed to promise by their vivacity. He was an attendant of Wildrake's choice, who had conferred on him the *nom de guerre* of Spitfire, and had promised him promotion so soon as his young protégé Breakfast, was fit to succeed him in his present office. It need scarce be said, that the menage was maintained entirely at the expense of Colonel Everard, who allowed Wildrake to arrange the household very much according to his pleasure. The page did not omit, in offering the company wine from time to time, to accommodate Wildrake with about twice the number of opportunities of refreshing himself which he considered it necessary to afford to the Colonel or his reverend guest.

While they were thus engaged, the good divine lost in his own argument, and the hearers in their private thoughts, their attention was about half past ten arrested by a knocking at the door of the house. To those who have anxious hearts, trifles give cause of alarm.

Even a thing so simple as a knock at the door, may have a character which excites apprehension. This was no quiet gentle tap, intimating a modest intruder;

no redoubled rattle, as the pompous annunciation of some vain person; neither did it resemble the formal summons to formal business, nor the cheerful visit of some welcome friend. It was a single blow, solemn and stern, if not actually menacing in the sound. The door was opened by some of the persons of the house; a heavy foot ascended the stair—a stout man entered the room, and drawing the cloak from his face, said, "Markham Everard, I greet thee in God's name."

It was General Cromwell.

Everard, surprised and taken at unawares, endeavoured in vain to find words to express his astonishment. A bustle occurred in receiving the General, assisting him to uncloak himself, and offering in dumb show the civilities of reception. The General cast his keen eye around the apartment, and fixing it first on the divine, addressed Everard as follows.

"A reverend man I see is with thee. Thou art not one of those, good Markham, who let the time unnoted and unimproved pass away. Casting aside the things of this world—pressing forward to those of the next—it is by thus using our time in this poor seat of terrestrial sin and care, that we may as it were——But how is this?" he continued, suddenly changing his tone, and speaking briefly, sharply, and anxiously—"One hath left the room since I entered?"

Wildrake had, indeed, been absent for a minute or two, but had now returned, and stepped forward from a bay window, as if he had been out of sight only, not out of the apartment. "Not so, sir, I stood but in

the background out of respect. Noble General, I hope all is well with the Estate, that your Excellency makes us so late a visit?—Would not your Excellency choose some——"

"Ah!" said Oliver, looking sternly and fixedly at him—"Our trusty Gobetween—our faithful confidant. —No, sir; at present, I desire nothing more than a kind reception, which, methinks, my friend Markham Everard is in no hurry to give me."

"You bring your own welcome, my lord," said Everard, compelling himself to speak.—"I can only trust it was no bad news that made your Excellency a late traveller, and ask, like my follower, what refreshment I shall command for your accommodation."

"The State is sound and healthy, Colonel Everard," said the General; "and yet the less so, that many of its members, who have been hitherto workers together, and propounders of good counsel, and advancers of the public weal, have now waxed cold in their love and in their affection for the Good Cause, for which we should be ready, in our various degrees, to act and do, so soon as we are called to act that whereunto we are appointed, neither rashly, nor over-slothfully, neither lukewarmly nor over-violently, but with such a frame and disposition, in which zeal and charity may, as it were, meet and kiss each other in our streets. Howbeit, because we look back after we have put our hand to the plough, therefore is our force waxed dim."

"Pardon me, sir," said Nehemiah Holdenough, who, listening with some impatience, began to guess in whose

company he stood—"Pardon me, for unto this I have a warrant to speak."

"Ah! ah!" said Cromwell. "Surely, most worthy sir, we grieve the Spirit when we restrain those pourings forth, which like water from a rock——"

"Nay, therein I differ from you, sir," said Holdenough; "for as there is the mouth to transmit the food, and the profit to digest what Heaven hath sent; so is the preacher ordained to teach, and the people to hear; the shepherd to gather the flock into the sheepfold, the sheep to profit by the care of the shepherd."

"Ah! my worthy sir," said Cromwell, with much unction, "methinks you verge upon the great mistake, which supposes that churches are tall large houses built by masons, and hearers are men—wealthy men, who pay tithes, the larger as well as the less; and that the priests, men in black gowns or gray cloaks, who receive the same, are in guerdon the only distributors of Christian blessings; whereas, in my apprehension, there is more of Christian liberty in leaving it to the discretion of the hungry soul to seek his edification where it can be found, whether from the mouth of a lay teacher, who claimeth his warrant from Heaven alone, or at the dispensation of those who take ordination and degrees from synods and universities, at best but associations of poor sinful creatures like themselves."

"You speak, you know not what, sir," replied Holdenough, impatiently. Can light come out of darkness, sense out of ignorance, or knowledge of the mysteries

of religion from such ignorant mediciners as give poisons instead of wholesome medicaments, and cram with filth the stomachs of such as seek to them for food?"

This, which the Presbyterian divine uttered rather warmly, the General answered with the utmost mildness.

"Lack-a-day, lack-a-day! a learned man, but intemperate; over-zeal hath eaten him up.—A well-a-day, sir, you may talk of your regular gospel-meals, but a word spoken in season by one whose heart is with your heart, just perhaps when you are riding on to encounter an enemy, or are about to mount a breach, is to the poor spirit like a rasher on the coals, which the hungry shall find preferable to a great banquet, at such times when the full soul loatheth the honey-comb. Nevertheless, although I speak thus in my poor judgment, I would not put force on the conscience of any man, leaving to the learned to follow the learned, and the wise to be instructed by the wise, while poor simple wretched souls are not to be denied a drink from the stream which runneth by the way.—Ay, verily, it will be a comely sight in England when men shall go on as in a better world, bearing with each other's infirmities, joining in each other's comforts.—Ay, truly, the rich drink out of silver flagons, and goblets of silver, the poor out of paltry bowls of wood—and even so let it be, since they both drink the same element."

Here an officer opened the door and looked in, to whom Cromwell, exchanging the canting drawl, in which it seemed he might have gone on interminably,

for the short brief tone of action, called out, "Pearson, is he come?"

"No, sir," replied Pearson; "we have inquired for him at the place you noted, and also at other haunts of his about the town."

"The knave!" said Cromwell, with bitter emphasis; "can he have proved false?—No, no, his interest is too deeply engaged. We shall find him by and by.—Hark thee hither."

While this conversation was going forward, the reader must imagine the alarm of Everard. He was certain that the personal attendance of Cromwell must be on some most important account, and he could not but strongly suspect that the General had some information respecting Charles's lurking place. If taken, a renewal of the tragedy of the 30th of January was instantly to be apprehended, and the ruin of the whole family of Lee, with himself probably included, must be the necessary consequence.

He looked eagerly for consolation at Wildrake, whose countenance expressed much alarm, which he endeavoured to bear out with his usual look of confidence. But the weight within was too great; he shuffled with his feet, rolled his eyes, and twisted his hands, like an unassured witness before an acute and not to be deceived judge.

Oliver, meanwhile, left his company not a minute's leisure to take counsel together. Even while his perplexed eloquence flowed on in a stream so mazy that no one could discover which way its course was tending,

his sharp watchful eye rendered all attempts of Everard to hold communication with Wildrake, even by signs, altogether vain. Everard, indeed, looked for an instant at the window, then glanced at Wildrake, as if to hint there might be a possibility to escape that way. But the cavalier had replied with a disconsolate shake of the head, so slight as to be almost imperceptible. Everard, therefore, lost all hope, and the melancholy feeling of approaching and inevitable evil, was only varied by anxiety concerning the shape and manner in which it was about to make its approach.

But Wildrake had a spark of hope left. The very instant Cromwell entered he had got out of the room, and down to the door of the house. "Back—back!" repeated by two armed sentinels, convinced him that, as his fears had anticipated, the General had come neither unattended nor unprepared He turned on his heel, ran up stairs, and meeting on the landing-place the boy whom he called Spitfire, hurried him into the small apartment which he occupied as his own. Wildrake had been shooting that morning, and game lay on the table. He pulled a feather from a woodcock's wing, and saying hastily, "For thy life, Spitfire, mind my orders—I will put thee safe out at the window into the court—the yard wall is not high—and there will be no sentry there—Fly to the Lodge, as thou wouldst win Heaven, and give this feather to Mistress Alice Lee, if possible—if not, to Joceline Joliffe—say I have won the wager of the young lady. Dost mark me, boy?"

The sharp-witted youth clapped his hand in his master's, and only replied, "Done, and done."

Wildrake opened the window, and, though the height was considerable, he contrived to let the boy down safely by holding his cloak. A heap of straw on which Spitfire lighted rendered the descent perfectly safe, and Wildrake saw him scramble over the wall of the court-yard, at the angle which bore on a back lane; and so rapidly was this accomplished, that the cavalier had just re-entered the room, when, the bustle attending Cromwell's arrival subsiding, his own absence began to be noticed.

He remained during Cromwell's lecture on the vanity of creeds, anxious in mind whether he might not have done better to send an explicit verbal message, since there was no time to write. But the chance of the boy being stopped, or becoming confused with feeling himself the messenger of a hurried and important communication, made him, on the whole, glad that he had preferred a more enigmatical way of conveying the intelligence. He had, therefore, the advantage of his patron, for he was conscious still of a spark of hope.

Pearson had scarce shut the door, when Holdenough, as ready in arms against the future Dictator as he had been prompt to encounter the supposed phantoms and fiends of Woodstock, resumed his attack upon the schismatics, whom he undertook to prove to be at once soul-slayers, false brethren, and false messengers; and was proceeding to allege texts in behalf of his proposition, when Cromwell, apparently tired of the discussion,

and desirous to introduce a discourse more accordant with his real feelings, interrupted him, though very civilly, and took the discourse into his own hands.

"Lack-a-day," he said, "the good man speaks truth, according to his knowledge and to his lights—ay, bitter truths, and hard to be digested, while we see as men see, and not with the eyes of angels.—False messengers, said the reverend man?—ay, truly, the world is full of such. You shall see them who will carry your secret message to the house of your mortal foe, and will say to him, 'Lo! my master is going forth with a small train, by such and such desolate places; be you speedy, therefore, that you may arise and slay him.' And another, who knoweth where the foe of your house, and enemy of your person, lies hidden, shall, instead of telling his master thereof, carry tidings to the enemy even where he lurketh, saying, 'Lo! my master knoweth of your secret abode—up, now, and fly, lest he come on thee like a lion on his prey.'—But shall this go without punishment?" looking at Wildrake with a withering glance. "Now, as my soul liveth, and as He liveth who hath made me a ruler in Israel, such false messengers shall be knitted to gibbets on the wayside, and their right hands shall be nailed above their heads, in an extended position, as if pointing out to others the road from which they themselves have strayed!"

"Surely," said Master Holdenough, "it is right to cut off such offenders."

"Thank ye, Mass-John," muttered Wildrake, "when did the Presbyterian fail to lend the devil a shove?"

"But, I say," continued Holdenough, "that the matter is estranged from our present purpose, for the false brethren of whom I spoke are——"

"Right, excellent sir, they be those of our own house," answered Cromwell; "the good man is right once more. Ay, of whom can we now say that he is a true brother, although he has lain in the same womb with us? Although we have struggled in the same cause, eat at the same table, fought in the same battle, worshipped at the same throne, there shall be no truth in him.—Ah, Markham Everard, Markham Everard!"

He paused at this ejaculation; and Everard, desirous at once of knowing how far he stood committed, replied, "Your Excellency seems to have something in your mind in which I am concerned. May I request you will speak it out, that I may know what I am accused of?"

"Ah, Mark, Mark," replied the General, "there needeth no accuser speak when the still small voice speaks within us. Is there not moisture on thy brow, Mark Everard? Is there not trouble in thine eye? Is there not a failure in thy frame? And who ever saw such things in noble and stout Markham Everard, whose brow was only moist after having worn the helmet for a summer's day—whose hand only shook when it had wielded for hours the weighty falchion?—But go to, man! thou doubtest over much. Hast thou not been to me as a brother, and shall I not forgive thee even the seventy-seventh time? The knave hath tarried somewhere, who should have done by this time

an office of much import. Take advantage of his absence, Mark; it is a grace that God gives thee beyond expectance. I do not say, fall at my feet; but speak to me as a friend to his friend."

"I have never said anything to your Excellency that was in the least undeserving the title you have assigned to me," said Colonel Everard, proudly.

"Nay, nay, Markham," answered Cromwell; "I say not you have. But—but you ought to have remembered the message I sent you by that person" (pointing to Wildrake); "and you must reconcile it with your conscience, how, having such a message, guarded with such reasons, you could think yourself at liberty to expel my friends from Woodstock, being determined to disappoint my object, whilst you availed yourself of the boon, on condition of which my warrant was issued."

Everard was about to reply, when, to his astonishment, Wildrake stepped forward; and with a voice and look very different from his ordinary manner, and approaching a good deal to real dignity of mind, said, boldly and calmly, "You are mistaken, Master Cromwell; and address yourself to the wrong party here."

The speech was so sudden and intrepid, that Cromwell stepped a pace back, and motioned with his right hand towards his weapon, as if he had expected that an address of a nature so unusually bold was to be followed by some act of violence. He instantly resumed his indifferent posture; and, irritated at a smile which he observed on Wildrake's countenance, he said, with the dignity of one long accustomed to see all tremble before

him. "This to me, fellow! Know you to whom you speak?"

"Fellow!" echoed Wildrake, whose reckless humour was now completely set afloat—"No fellow of yours, Master Oliver. I have known the day when Roger Wildrake of Squattlesea-mere, Lincoln, a handsome young gallant with a good estate, would have been thought no fellow of the bankrupt brewer of Huntingdon."

"Be silent!" said Everard; "be silent, Wildrake, if you love your life!"

"I care not a maravedi for my life," said Wildrake. "Zounds, if he dislikes what I say, let him take to his tools! I know, after all, he hath good blood in his veins; and I will indulge him with a turn in the court yonder, had he been ten times a brewer."

"Such ribaldry, friend," said Oliver, "I treat with the contempt it deserves. But if thou hast anything to say touching the matter in question, speak out like a man, though thou look'st more like a beast."

"All I have to say is," replied Wildrake, "that whereas you blame Everard for acting on your warrant, as you call it, I can tell you, he knew not a word of the rascally conditions you talk of. I took care of that; and you may take the vengeance on me, if you list."

"Slave! dare you tell this to *me?*" said Cromwell, still heedfully restraining his passion, which he felt was about to discharge itself upon an unworthy object.

"Ay, you will make every Englishman a slave, if you have your own way," said Wildrake, not a whit

abashed;—for the awe which had formerly overcome him when alone with this remarkable man, had vanished, now that they were engaged in an altercation before witnesses.—"But do your worst, Master Oliver; I tell you beforehand, the bird has escaped you."

"You dare not say so!—Escaped—So ho! Pearson! tell the soldiers to mount instantly.—Thou art a lying fool!—Escaped?—Where, or from whence?"

"Ay, that is the question," said Wildrake; "for look you, sir—that men do go from hence is certain—but how they go, or to what quarter——"

Cromwell stood attentive, expecting some useful hint from the careless impetuosity of the cavalier, upon the route which the King might have taken.

"—Or to what quarter, as I said before, why, your Excellency, Master Oliver, may e'en find that out yourself."

As he uttered the last words he unsheathed his rapier, and made a full pass at the General's body. Had his sword met no other impediment than the buff jerkin, Cromwell's course had ended on the spot. But, fearful of such attempts, the General wore under his military dress a shirt of the finest mail, made of rings of the best steel, and so light and flexible that it was little or no encumbrance to the motions of the wearer. It proved his safety on this occasion, for the rapier sprung in shivers; while the owner, now held back by Everard and Holdenough, flung the hilt with passion on the ground, exclaiming, "Be damned the hand that

forged thee!—To serve me so long, and fail me when thy true service would have honoured us both for ever! But no good could come of thee, since thou wert pointed, even in jest, at a learned divine of the Church of England."

In the first instant of alarm, and perhaps suspecting Wildrake might be supported by others, Cromwell half drew from his bosom a concealed pistol, which he hastily returned, observing that both Everard and the clergyman were withholding the cavalier from another attempt.

Pearson and a soldier or two rushed in—"Secure that fellow," said the General, in the indifferent tone of one to whom imminent danger was too familiar to cause irritation—"Bind him—but not so hard, Pearson;"—for the men, to shew their zeal, were drawing their belts, which they used for want of cords, brutally tight round Wildrake's limbs. "He would have assassinated me, but I would reserve him for his fit doom."

"Assassinated!—I scorn your words, Master Oliver," said Wildrake; "I proffered you a fair duello."

"Shall we shoot him in the street, for an example?" said Pearson to Cromwell; while Everard endeavoured to stop Wildrake from giving further offence.

"On your life harm him not; but let him be kept in safe ward, and well looked after," said Cromwell; while the prisoner exclaimed to Everard, "I prithee let me alone—I am now neither thy follower, nor any man's, and I am as willing to die as ever I was to take a cup of liquor.—And hark ye, speaking of that, Master

Oliver, you were once a jolly fellow, prithee let one of thy lobsters here advance yonder tankard to my lips, and your Excellency shall hear a toast, a song, and a—secret."

"Unloose his head, and hand the debauched beast the tankard," said Oliver; "while yet he exists, it were shame to refuse him the element he lives in."

"Blessings on your head for once," said Wildrake, whose object in continuing this wild discourse was, if possible, to gain a little delay when every moment was precious. "Thou hast brewed good ale, and that's warrant for a blessing. For my toast and my song, here they go together—

Son of a witch,
Mayst thou die in a ditch,
With the butchers who back thy quarrels;
And rot above ground,
While the world shall resound
A welcome to Royal King Charles.

And now for my secret, that you may not say I had your liquor for nothing—I fancy my song will scarce pass current for much—My secret is, Master Cromwell—that the bird is flown—and your red nose will be as white as your winding-sheet before you can smell out which way."

"Pshaw, rascal," answered Cromwell, contemptuously, "keep your scurrile jests for the gibbet foot."

"I shall look on the gibbet more boldly," replied Wildrake, "than I have seen you look on the Royal Martyr's picture."

This reproach touched Cromwell to the very quick.

—"Villain!" he exclaimed; "drag him hence, draw out a party, and——But hold, not now—to prison with him—let him be close watched, and gagged, if he attempts to speak to the sentinels—Nay, hold—I mean, put a bottle of brandy into his cell, and he will gag himself in his own way, I warrant you—When day comes, that men can see the example, he shall be gagged after my fashion."

During the various breaks in his orders, the General was evidently getting command of his temper; and though he began in fury, he ended with the contemptuous sneer of one who overlooks the abusive language of an inferior. Something remained on his mind notwithstanding, for he continued standing, as if fixed to the same spot in the apartment, his eyes bent on the ground, and with closed hand pressed against his lips, like a man who is musing deeply. Pearson, who was about to speak to him, drew back, and made a sign to those in the room to be silent.

Master Holdenough did not mark, or, at least, did not obey it. Approaching the General, he said, in a respectful but firm tone, "Did I understand it to be your Excellency's purpose that this poor man shall die next morning?"

"Hah!" exclaimed Cromwell, starting from his reverie, "what say'st thou?"

"I took leave to ask, if it was your will that this unhappy man should die to-morrow?"

"Whom saidst thou?" demanded Cromwell: "Markham Everard—shall he die, saidst thou?"

"God forbid!" replied Holdenough, stepping back —"I asked whether this blinded creature, Wildrake, was to be so suddenly cut off?"

"Ay, marry is he," said Cromwell, "were the whole General Assembly of Divines at Westminster—the whole Sanhedrim of Presbytery—to offer bail for him."

"If you will not think better of it, sir," said Holdenough, "at least give not the poor man the means of destroying his senses—Let me go to him as a divine, to watch with him, in case he may yet be admitted into the vineyard at the latest hour—yet brought into the sheepfold though he has neglected the call of the pastor till time is well-nigh closed upon him."

"For God's sake," said Everard, who had hitherto kept silence, because he knew Cromwell's temper on such occasions, "think better of what you do!"

"Is it for thee to teach me?" replied Cromwell; "think thou of thine own matters, and believe me it will require all thy wit.—And for you, reverend sir, I will have no father-confessors attend my prisoners—no tales out of school. If the fellow thirsts after ghostly comfort, as he is much more like to thirst after a quartern of brandy, there is Corporal Humgudgeon, who commands the *corps de garde*, will preach and pray as well as the best of ye.—But this delay is intolerable—Comes not this fellow yet?"

"No, sir," replied Pearson. "Had we not better go down to the Lodge? The news of our coming hither may else get there before us."

"True," said Cromwell, speaking aside to his officer,

"but you know Tomkins warned us against doing so, alleging there were so many postern-doors, and sally-ports, and concealed entrances in the old house, that it was like a rabbit-warren, and that an escape might be easily made under our very noses, unless he were with us, to point out all the ports which should be guarded. He hinted, too, that he might be delayed a few minutes after his time of appointment—but we have now waited half an hour."

"Does your Excellency think Tomkins is certainly to be depended upon?" said Pearson.

"As far as his interest goes, unquestionably," replied the General. "He has ever been the pump by which I have sucked the marrow out of many a plot, in special those of the conceited fool Rochecliffe, who is goose enough to believe that such a fellow as Tomkins would value anything beyond the offer of the best bidder. And yet it groweth late—I fear we must to the Lodge without him—Yet, all things well considered, I will tarry here till midnight.—Ah! Everard, thou mightest put this gear to rights if thou wilt! Shall some foolish principle of fantastic punctilio have more weight with thee, man, than have the pacification and welfare of England; the keeping of faith to thy friend and benefactor, and who will be yet more so, and the fortune and security of thy relations? Are these, I say, lighter in the balance than the cause of a worthless boy, who, with his father and his father's house, have troubled Israel for fifty years?"

"I do not understand your Excellency, nor at what

service you point, which I can honestly render," replied Everard. "That which is dishonest I should be loath that you proposed."

"Then this at least might suit your honesty, or scrupulous humour, call it which thou wilt," said Cromwell. "Thou knowest, surely, all the passages about Jezabel's palace down yonder?—Let me know how they may be guarded against the escape of any from within."

"I cannot pretend to aid you in this matter," said Everard; "I know not all the entrances and posterns about Woodstock, and if I did, I am not free in conscience to communicate with you on this occasion."

"We shall do without you, sir," replied Cromwell, haughtily; "and if aught is found which may criminate you, remember you have lost right to my protection."

"I shall be sorry," said Everard, "to have lost your friendship, General; but I trust my quality as an Englishman may dispense with the necessity of protection from any man. I know no law which obliges me to be spy or informer, even if I were in the way of having opportunity to do service in either honourable capacity."

"Well, sir," said Cromwell, "for all your privileges and qualities, I will make bold to take you down to the Lodge at Woodstock to-night, to inquire into affairs in which the State is concerned.—Come hither, Pearson." He took a paper from his pocket containing a rough sketch or ground-plan of Woodstock Lodge, with the avenues leading to it.—"Look here," he said, "we must

move in two bodies on foot, and with all possible silence —thou must march to the rear of the old house of iniquity with twenty file of men, and dispose them around it the wisest thou canst. Take the reverend man there along with you. He must be secured at any rate, and may serve as a guide. I myself will occupy the front of the Lodge, and thus having stopt all the earths, thou wilt come to me for farther orders—silence and despatch is all.—But for the dog Tomkins, who broke appointment with me, he had need render a good excuse, or woe to his father's son!—Reverend sir, be pleased to accompany that officer.—Colonel Everard, you are to follow me; but first give your sword to Captain Pearson, and consider yourself as under arrest."

Everard gave his sword to Pearson without any comment, and with the most anxious presage of evil followed the Republican General, in obedience to commands which it would have been useless to dispute.

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-FIRST.

"Were my son William here but now
He wadna fail the pledge."
Wi' that in at the door there ran
A ghastly-looking page—
"I saw them, master, Oh! I saw,
Beneath the thornie brae,
Of black-mailed warriors many a rank,
Revenge!" he cried, "and gae"—

HENRY MACKENZIE.

THE little party at the Lodge were assembled at supper, at the early hour of eight o'clock. Sir Henry Lee, neglecting the food that was placed on the table, stood by a lamp on the chimney-piece, and read a letter with mournful attention.

"Does my son write to you more particularly than to me, Doctor Rochecliffe?" said the knight. "He only says here, that he will return probably this night; and that Master Kerneguy must be ready to set off with him instantly. What can this haste mean? Have you heard of any new search after our suffering party? I wish they would permit me to enjoy my son's company in quiet but for a day."

"The quiet which depends on the wicked ceasing from troubling," said Doctor Rochecliffe, "is connected, not by days and hours, but by minutes. Their glut of blood at Worcester had satiated them for a moment, but their appetite, I fancy, has revived."

"You have news, then, to that purpose?" said Sir Henry.

"Your son," replied the Doctor, "wrote to me by the same messenger: he seldom fails to do so, being aware of what importance it is that I should know everything that passes. Means of escape are provided on the coast, and Master Kerneguy must be ready to start with your son the instant he appears."

"It is strange," said the knight; "for forty years I have dwelt in this house, man and boy, and the point only was how to make the day pass over our heads; for if I did not scheme out some hunting match or hawking, or the like, I might have sat here on my arm-chair, as undisturbed as a sleeping dormouse, from one end of the year to the other; and now I am more like a hare on her form, that dare not sleep unless with her eyes open, and scuds off when the wind rustles among the fern."

"It is strange," said Alice, looking at Doctor Rochecliffe, "that the roundhead steward has told you nothing of this. He is usually communicative enough of the motions of his party; and I saw you close together this morning."

"I must be closer with him this evening," said the Doctor gloomily; "but he will not blab."

"I wish you may not trust him too much," said Alice in reply.—"To me, that man's face, with all its shrewdness, evinces such a dark expression, that methinks I read treason in his very eye."

"Be assured, that matter is looked to," answered the Doctor, in the same ominous tone as before. No one replied, and there was a chilling and anxious feeling of apprehension which seemed to sink down on the company at once, like those sensations which make such constitutions as are particularly subject to the electrical influence, conscious of an approaching thunderstorm.

The disguised Monarch, apprized that day to be prepared on short notice to quit his temporary asylum, felt his own share of the gloom which involved the little society. But he was the first also to shake it off, as what neither suited his character nor his situation. Gaiety was the leading distinction of the former, and presence of mind, not depression of spirits, was required by the latter.

"We make the hour heavier," he said, "by being melancholy about it. Had you not better join me, Mistress Alice, in Patrick Carey's jovial farewell?—Ah,

you do not know Pat Carey—a younger brother of Lord Falkland's."*

"A brother of the immortal Lord Falkland's, and write songs!" said the Doctor.

"Oh, Doctor, the Muses take tithe as well as the Church," said Charles, "and have their share in every family of distinction. You do not know the words, Mistress Alice, but you can aid me, notwithstanding, in the burden at least—

> Come, now that we're parting, and 'tis one to ten
> If the towers of sweet Woodstock I e'er see agen,
> Let us e'en have a frolic, and drink like tall men
> While the goblet goes merrily round" †

The song arose, but not with spirit. It was one of those efforts at forced mirth, by which, above all other modes of expressing it, the absence of real cheerfulness is most distinctly intimated. Charles stopt the song, and upbraided the choristers.

"You sing, my dear Mistress Alice, as if you were chanting one of the seven penitential psalms; and you, good Doctor, as if you recited the funeral service."

The Doctor rose hastily from the table, and turned to the window; for the expression connected singularly with the task which he was that evening to discharge. Charles looked at him with some surprise; for the peril in which he lived, made him watchful of the slightest

* Note B. Patrick Carey.

† The original song of Carey bears Wykeham, instead of Woodstock, for the locality. The verses are full of the bacchanalian spirit of the time.

motions of those around him—then turned to Sir Henry, and said, "my honoured host, can you tell any reason for this moody fit, which has so strangely crept upon us all?"

"Not I, my dear Louis," replied the knight; "I have no skill in these nice quillets of philosophy. I could as soon undertake to tell you the reason why Bevis turns round three times before he lies down. I can only say for myself, that if age and sorrow and uncertainty be enough to break a jovial spirit, or at least to bend it now and then, I have my share of them all; so that I, for one, cannot say that I am sad merely because I am not merry. I have but too good cause for sadness. I would I saw my son, were it but for a minute."

Fortune seemed for once disposed to gratify the old man; for Albert Lee entered at that moment. He was dressed in a riding suit, and appeared to have travelled hard. He cast his eye hastily around as he entered. It rested for a second on that of the disguised Prince, and satisfied with the glance which he received in lieu, he hastened, after the fashion of the olden day, to kneel down to his father, and request his blessing.

"It is thine, my boy," said the old man; a tear springing to his eyes as he laid his hand on the long locks, which distinguish the young cavalier's rank and principles, and which, usually combed and curled with some care, now hung wild and dishevelled about his shoulders. They remained an instant in this posture, when the old man suddenly started from it, as if ashamed

of the emotion which he had expressed before so many witnesses, and passing the back of his hand hastily across his eyes, bid Albert get up and mind his supper, "since I dare say you have ridden fast and far since you last baited—and we'll send round a cup to his health, if Docter Rochecliffe and the good company pleases—Joceline, thou knave, skink about—thou look'st as if thou hadst seen a ghost."

"Joceline," said Alice, "is sick for sympathy—one of the stags ran at Phœbe Mayflower to-day, and she was fain to have Joceline's assistance to drive the creature off—the girl has been in fits since she came home."

"Silly slut," said the old knight—"she a woodman's daughter!—But, Joceline, if the deer gets dangerous, you must send a broad arrow through him."

"It will not need, Sir Henry," said Joceline, speaking with great difficulty of utterance—"he is quiet enough now—he will not offend in that sort again."

"See it be so," replied the knight; "remember Mistress Alice often walks in the chase. And now fill round, and fill, too, a cup to thyself to over-red thy fear, as mad Will has it. Tush, man, Phœbe will do well enough—she only screamed and ran, that thou might'st have the pleasure to help her. Mind what thou dost, and do not go spilling the wine after that fashion.—Come, here is a health to our wanderer, who has come to us again."

"None will pledge it more willingly than I," said the disguised Prince, unconsciously assuming an im-

portance which the character he personated scarce warranted; but Sir Henry, who had become fond of the supposed page, with all his peculiarities, imposed only a moderate rebuke upon his petulance. "Thou art a merry, good-humoured youth, Louis," he said; "but it is a world to see how the forwardness of the present generation hath gone beyond the gravity and reverence which in my youth was so regularly observed towards those of higher rank and station—I dared no more have given my own tongue the rein, when there was a doctor of divinity in company, than I would have dared to have spoken in church in service time."

"True, sir," said Albert, hastily interfering, "but Master Kerneguy had the better right to speak at present, that I have been absent on his business as well as my own, have seen several of his friends, and bring him important intelligence."

Charles was about to rise and beckon Albert aside, naturally impatient to know what news he had procured, or what scheme of safe escape was now decreed for him. But Doctor Rochecliffe twitched his cloak, as a hint to him to sit still, and not shew any extraordinary motive for anxiety, since, in case of a sudden discovery of his real quality, the violence of Sir Henry Lee's feelings might have been likely to attract too much attention.

Charles, therefore, only replied, as to the knight's stricture, that he had a particular title to be sudden and unceremonious in expressing his thanks to Colonel Lee—that gratitude was apt to be unmannerly—

finally, that he was much obliged to Sir Henry for his admonition; and that quit Woodstock when he would, "he was sure to leave it a better man than he came there."

His speech was of course ostensibly directed towards the father; but a glance at Alice assured her that she had her full share in the compliment.

"I fear," he concluded, addressing Albert, "that you come to tell us our stay here must be very short."

"A few hours only," said Albert—"just enough for needful rest for ourselves and our horses. I have procured two which are good and tried. But Doctor Rochecliffe broke faith with me. I expected to have met some one down at Joceline's hut, where I left the horses; and finding no person, I was delayed an hour in littering them down myself, that they might be ready for to-morrow's work—for we must be off before day."

"I—I—intended to have sent Tomkins—but—but" ——hesitated the Doctor, "I"——

"The roundheaded rascal was drunk, or out of the way, I presume," said Albert. "I am glad of it—you may easily trust him too far."

"Hitherto he has been faithful," said the Doctor, "and I scarce think he will fail me now. But Joceline will go down and have the horses in readiness in the morning."

Joceline's countenance was usually that of alacrity itself on a case extraordinary. Now, however, he seemed to hesitate.

"You will go with me a little way, Doctor!" he said, as he edged himself closely to Rochecliffe.

"How? puppy, fool, and blockhead," said the knight, "wouldst thou ask Doctor Rochecliffe to bear thee company at this hour?—Out, hound!—get down to the kennel yonder instantly, or I will break the knave's pate of thee."

Joceline looked with an eye of agony at the divine, as if entreating him to interfere in his behalf; but just as he was about to speak, a most melancholy howling arose at the hall-door, and a dog was heard scratching for admittance.

"What ails Bevis next?" said the old knight. "I think this must be All-Fools-day, and that every thing around me is going mad!"

The same sound startled Albert and Charles from a private conference in which they had engaged, and Albert ran to the hall-door to examine personally into the cause of the noise.

"It is no alarm," said the old knight to Kerneguy, "for in such cases the dog's bark is short, sharp, and furious. These long howls are said to be ominous. It was even so that Bevis's grandsire bayed the whole livelong night on which my poor father died. If it comes now as a presage, God send it regard the old and useless, not the young, and those who may yet serve King and country!"

The dog had pushed past Colonel Lee, who stood a little while at the hall-door to listen if there were any thing stirring without, while Bevis advanced into the

room where the company were assembled, bearing something in his mouth, and exhibiting, in an unusual degree, that sense of duty and interest which a dog seems to shew when he thinks he has the charge of something important. He entered, therefore, drooping his long tail, slouching his head and ears, and walking with the stately yet melancholy dignity of a war-horse at his master's funeral. In this manner he paced through the room, went straight up to Joceline, who had been regarding him with astonishment, and uttering a short and melancholy howl, laid at his feet the object which he bore in his mouth. Joceline stooped, and took from the floor a man's glove, of the fashion worn by the troopers, having something like the old-fashioned gauntlet projections of thick leather arising from the wrist, which go half way up to the elbow, and secure the arm against a cut with a sword. But Joceline had no sooner looked at what in itself was so common an object, than he dropped it from his hand, staggered backward, uttered a groan, and nearly fell to the ground.

"Now, the coward's curse be upon thee for an idiot!" said the knight, who had picked up the glove, and was looking at it—"thou shouldst be sent back to school, and flogged till the craven's blood was switched out of thee—What dost thou look at but a glove, thou base poltroon, and a very dirty glove, too?—Stay, here is writing—Joseph Tomkins? why, that is the round-headed fellow—I wish he hath not come to some mischief—for this is not dirt on the cheveron, but blood

—Bevis may have bit the fellow, and yet the dog seemed to love him well too—or the stag may have hurt him—Out, Joceline, instantly, and see where he is—wind your bugle."

"I cannot go," said Joliffe, "unless"—and again he looked piteously at Doctor Rochecliffe, who saw no time was to be lost in appeasing the ranger's terrors, as his ministry was most needful in the present circumstances. —"Get spade and mattock," he whispered to him, "and a dark lantern, and meet me in the wilderness."

Joceline left the room; and the Doctor, before following him, had a few words of explanation with Colonel Lee. His own spirit, far from being dismayed on the occasion, rather rose higher, like one whose natural element was intrigue and danger. "Here hath been wild work," he said "since you parted. Tomkins was rude to the wench Phœbe—Joceline and he had a brawl together, and Tomkins is lying dead in the thicket, not far from Rosamond's Well. It will be necessary that Joceline and I go directly to bury the body; for besides that some one might stumble upon it, and raise an alarm, this fellow Joceline will never be fit for any active purpose till it is under ground. Though as stout as a lion, the under-keeper has his own weak side, and is more afraid of a dead body than a living one. When do you propose to start to-morrow?"

"By daybreak, or earlier," said Colonel Lee; "but we will meet again—A vessel is provided, and I have relays in more places than one—we go off from the

coast of Sussex; and I am to get a letter at ——, acquainting me precisely with the spot."

"Wherefore not go off instantly," said the Doctor.

"The horses would fail us," replied Albert; "they have been hard ridden to-day."

"Adieu," said Rochecliffe, "I must to my task— Do you take rest and repose for yours. To conceal a slaughtered body, and convey on the same night a king from danger and captivity, are two feats which have fallen to few folks save myself; but let me not, while putting on my harness, boast myself as if I were taking it off after a victory." So saying he left the apartment, and muffling himself in his cloak, went out into what was called the Wilderness.

The weather was a raw frost. The mist lay in partial wreaths upon the lower grounds; but the night, considering that the heavenly bodies were in a great measure hidden by the haze, was not extremely dark. Doctor Rochecliffe could not, however, distinguish the under-keeper, until he had hemmed once or twice, when Joceline answered the signal by shewing a glimpse of light from the dark lantern which he carried. Guided by this intimation of his presence, the divine found him leaning against a buttress which had once supported a terrace, now ruinous. He had a pickaxe and shovel, together with a deer's hide hanging over his shoulder.

"What do you want with the hide, Joceline," said Dr. Rochecliffe, "that you lumber it about with you on such an errand?"

"Why, look you, Doctor," he answered, "it is as

well to tell you all about it. The man and I—he there —you know whom I mean—had many years since a quarrel about this deer. For though we were great friends, and Philip was sometimes allowed by my master's permission to help me in mine office, yet I knew, for all that, Philip Hazeldine was sometimes a trespasser. The deer-stealers were very bold at that time, it being just before the breaking out of the war, when men were becoming unsettled. And so it chanced, that one day, in the Chase, I found two fellows, with their faces blacked, and shirts over their clothes, carrying as prime a buck between them as any was in the park. I was upon them in the instant—one escaped, but I got hold of the other fellow, and who should it prove to be but trusty Phil Hazeldine! Well, I don't know whether it was right or wrong, but he was my old friend and pot-companion, and I took his word for amendment in future; and he helped me to hang up the deer on a tree, and I came back with a horse to carry him to the Lodge, and tell the knight the story, all but Phil's name. But the rogues had been too clever for me; for they had flayed and dressed the deer, and quartered him, and carried him off, and left the hide and horns, with a chime, saying—

> The haunch to thee,
> The breast to me,
> The hide and the horns for the keeper's fee.

And this I knew for one of Phil's mad pranks, that he would play in those days with any lad in the country. But I was so nettled, that I made the deer's hide be

curried and dressed by a tanner, and swore that it should be his winding-sheet or mine; and though I had long repented my rash oath, yet now, Doctor, you see what it has come to—though I forgot it, the devil did not."

"It was a very wrong thing to make a vow so sinful," said Rochecliffe; "but it would have been greatly worse had you endeavoured to keep it. Therefore, I bid you cheer up," said the good divine; "for in this unhappy case, I could not have wished, after what I have heard from Phœbe and yourself, that you should have kept your hand still, though I may regret that the blow has proved fatal. Nevertheless, thou hast done even that which was done by the great and inspired legislator, when he beheld an Egyptian tyrannizing over a Hebrew, saving that, in the case present, it was a female, when, says the Septuagint, *Percussum Egyptium abscondit sabulo;* the meaning whereof I will explain to you another time. Wherefore, I exhort you, not to grieve beyond measure; for, although this circumstance is unhappy in time and place, yet, from what Phœbe hath informed me of yonder wretch's opinions, it is much to be regretted that his brains had not been beaten out in his cradle, rather than that he had grown up to be one of those Grindlestonians, or Muggletonians, in whom is the perfection of every foul and blasphemous heresy, united with such an universal practice of hypocritical assentation, as would deceive their master, even Satan himself."

"Nevertheless, sir," said the forester, "I hope you

will bestow some of the service of the church on this poor man, as it was his last wish, naming you, sir, at the same time; and unless this were done, I should scarce dare to walk out in the dark again, for my whole life."

"Thou art a silly fellow—but if," continued the Doctor, "he named me as he departed, and desired the last rites of the church, there was, it may be, a turning from evil and a seeking to good even in his last moments; and if Heaven granted him grace to form a prayer so fitting, wherefore should man refuse it? All I fear is the briefness of time."

"Nay, your reverence may cut the service somewhat short," said Joceline; "assuredly he does not deserve the whole of it; only if something were not to be done, I believe I should flee the country. They were his last words; and methinks he sent Bevis with his glove to put me in mind of them."

"Out, fool! Do you think," said the Doctor, "dead men send gauntlets to the living, like knights in a romance; or, if so, would they choose dogs to carry their challenges? I tell thee, fool, the cause was natural enough. Bevis, questing about, found the body, and brought the glove to you to intimate where it was lying, and to require assistance; for such is the high instinct of these animals towards one in peril."

"Nay, if you think so, Doctor," said Joceline—"and, doubtless, I must say, Bevis took an interest in the man—if indeed it was not something worse in the shape of Bevis, for methought his eyes looked wild and fiery, as if he would have spoken."

As he talked thus, Joceline rather hung back, and, in doing so, displeased the Doctor, who exclaimed, "Come along, thou lazy laggard. Art thou a soldier, and a brave one, and so much afraid of a dead man? Thou hast killed men in battle, and in chase, I warrant thee."

"Ay, but their backs were to me," said Joceline. "I never saw one of them cast back his head, and glare at me as yonder fellow did, his eye retaining a glance of hatred, mixed with terror and reproach, till it became fixed like a jelly. And were you not with me, and my master's concerns, and something else, very deeply at stake, I promise you I would not again look at him for all Woodstock."

"You must, though," said the Doctor, suddenly pausing,—"for here is the place where he lies. Come hither deep into the copse; take care of stumbling—Here is a place just fitting, and we will draw the briers over the grave afterwards."

As the Doctor thus issued his directions, he assisted also in the execution of them; and while his attendant laboured to dig a shallow and misshapen grave, a task which the state of the soil, perplexed with roots, and hardened by the influence of the frost, rendered very difficult, the divine read a few passages out of the funeral service, partly in order to appease the superstitious terrors of Joceline, and partly because he held it matter of conscience not to deny the church's rites to one who had requested their aid in extremity.

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-SECOND.

Case ye, case ye,—on with your vizards.
HENRY IV.

THE company whom we had left in Victor Lee's parlour were about to separate for the night, and had risen to take a formal leave of each other, when a tap was heard at the hall-door. Albert, the vidette of the party, hastened to open it, enjoining, as he left the room, the rest to remain quiet, until he had ascertained the cause of the knocking. When he gained the portal, he called to know who was there, and what they wanted at so late an hour.

"It is only me," answered a treble voice.

"And what is your name, my little fellow?" said Albert.

"Spitfire, sir," replied the voice without.

"Spitfire?" said Albert.

"Yes, sir," replied the voice; "all the world calls me so, and Colonel Everard himself. But my name is Spittal for all that."

"Colonel Everard! arrive you from him?" demanded young Lee.

"No, sir; I come, sir, from Roger Wildrake, esquire, of Squattlesea-mere, if it like you," said the boy; "and I have brought a token to Mistress Lee, which I am to give into her own hands, if you would but open the door, sir, and let me in—but I can do nothing with a three-inch board between us."

"It is some freak of that drunken rakehell," said Albert, in a low voice, to his sister, who had crept out after him on tiptoe.

"Yet let us not be hasty in concluding so," said the young lady, "at this moment the least trifle may be of consequence.—What token has Master Wildrake sent me, my little boy?"

"Nay, nothing very valuable neither," replied the boy; "but he was so anxious you should get it, that he put me out of window as one would chuck out a kitten, that I might not be stopped by the soldiers."

"Hear you?" said Alice to her brother; "undo the gate for God's sake."

Her brother, to whom her feelings of suspicion were now sufficiently communicated, opened the gate in haste, and admitted the boy, whose appearance, not much dissimilar to that of a skinned rabbit in a livery, or a

monkey at a fair, would at another time have furnished them with amusement. The urchin messenger entered the hall, making several odd bows and congés, and delivered the woodcock's feather* with much ceremony to the young lady, assuring her it was the prize she had won upon a wager about hawking.

"I prithee, my little man," said Albert, "was your master drunk or sober, when he sent thee all this way with a feather at this time of night?"

"With reverence, sir," said the boy, "he was what *he* calls sober, and what I would call concerned in liquor for any other person."

"Curse on the drunken coxcomb!" said Albert.—"There is a tester for thee, boy, and tell thy master to break his jests on suitable persons, and at fitting times."

"Stay yet a minute," exclaimed Alice; "we must not go too fast—this craves wary walking."

"A feather," said Albert; "all this work about a feather! Why, Dr. Rochecliffe, who can suck intelligence out of every trifle as a magpie would suck an egg, could make nothing of this."

"Let us try what we can do without him then," said Alice. Then addressing herself to the boy,—"So there are strangers at your master's?"

"At Colonel Everard's, madam, which is the same thing," said Spitfire.

"And what manner of strangers," said Alice; "guests, I suppose?"

"Ay, Mistress," said the boy, "a sort of guests that

* Note C. Signal of Danger by the Token of a Feather.

make themselves welcome wherever they come if they meet not a welcome from the landlord—soldiers, madam."

"The men that have been long lying at Woodstock?" said Albert.

"No, sir," said Spitfire, "new comers, with gallant buff-coats and steel breastplates; and their commander—your honour and your ladyship never saw such a man—at least I am sure Bill Spitfire never did."

"Was he tall or short?" said Albert, now much alarmed.

"Neither one nor other," said the boy; "stout made, with slouching shoulders; a nose large, and a face one would not like to say No to. He had several officers with him. I saw him but for a moment, but I shall never forget him while I live."

"You are right," said Albert Lee to his sister, pulling her to one side, "quite right—the Archfiend himself is upon us!"

"And the feather," said Alice, whom fear had rendered apprehensive of slight tokens, "means flight—and a woodcock is a bird of passage."

"You have hit it," said her brother; "but the time has taken us cruelly short. Give the boy a trifle more—nothing that can excite suspicion, and dismiss him. I must summon Rochecliffe and Joceline."

He went accordingly, but, unable to find those he sought, he returned with hasty steps to the parlour, where, in his character of Louis, the page was exerting himself to detain the old knight, who, while laughing

at the tales he told him, was anxious to go to see what was passing in the hall.

"What is the matter, Albert?" said the old man; "who calls at the Lodge at so undue an hour, and wherefore is the hall-door opened to them? I will not have my rules, and the regulations laid down for keeping this house, broken through, because I am old and poor. Why answer you not? why keep a chattering with Louis Kerneguy, and neither of you all the while minding what I say?—Daughter Alice, have you sense and civility enough to tell me, what or who it is that is admitted here contrary to my general orders?"

"No one, sir," replied Alice; "a boy brought a message, which I fear is an alarming one."

"There is only fear, sir," said Albert, stepping forward, "that whereas we thought to have stayed with you till to-morrow, we must now take farewell of you to-night."

"Not so, brother," said Alice, "you must stay and aid the defence here—if you and Master Kerneguy are both missed, the pursuit will be instant, and probably successful; but if you stay, the hiding-places about this house will take some time to search. You can change coats with Kerneguy too."

"Right, noble wench," said Albert, "most excellent—yes—Louis, I remain as Kerneguy, you fly as young Master Lee."

"I cannot see the justice of that," said Charles.

"Nor I neither," said the knight, interfering. "Men come and go, lay schemes, and alter them, in my house,

without deigning to consult me! And who is Master Kerneguy, or what is he to me, that my son must stay and take the chance of mischief, and this your Scotch page is to escape in his dress? I will have no such contrivance carried into effect, though it were the finest cobweb that was ever woven in Doctor Rochecliffe's brains.—I wish you no ill, Louis; thou art a lively boy; but I have been somewhat too lightly treated in this, man."

"I am fully of your opinion, Sir Henry," replied the person whom he addressed. "You have been, indeed, repaid for your hospitality by want of that confidence, which could never have been so justly reposed. But the moment is come, when I must say, in a word, I am that unfortunate Charles Stuart, whose lot it has been to become the cause of ruin to his best friends, and whose present residence in your family threatens to bring destruction to you, and all around you."

"Master Louis Kerneguy," said the knight very angrily, "I will teach you to choose the subjects of your mirth better when you address them to me; and moreover, very little provocation would make me desire to have an ounce or two of that malapert blood from you."

"Be still, sir, for Godsake!" said Albert to his father. "This is indeed THE KING; and such is the danger of his person, that every moment we waste may bring round a fatal catastrophe."

"Good God!" said the father, clasping his hands

together, and about to drop on his knees, "has my earnest wish been accomplished! and is it in such a manner as to make me pray it had never taken place!"

He then attempted to bend his knee to the King—kissed his hand, while large tears trickled from his eyes—then said, "Pardon, my Lord—your Majesty, I mean—permit me to sit in your presence but one instant till my blood beats more freely, and then——"

Charles raised his ancient and faithful subject from the ground; and even in that moment of fear, and anxiety, and danger, insisted on leading him to his seat, upon which he sunk in apparent exhaustion, his head drooping upon his long white beard, and big unconscious tears mingling with its silver hairs. Alice and Albert remained with the King, arguing and urging his instant departure.

"The horses are at the under-keeper's hut," said Albert, "and the relays only eighteen or twenty miles off. If the horses can but carry you so far——"

"Will you not rather," interrupted Alice, "trust to the concealments of this place, so numerous and so well tried—Rochecliffe's apartments, and the yet farther places of secrecy?"

"Alas!" said Albert, "I know them only by name. My father was sworn to confide them to but one man, and he had chosen Rochecliffe."

"I prefer taking the field to any hiding-hole in England," said the King. "Could I but find my way to this hut where the horses are, I would try what arguments whip and spur could use to get them to the

rendezvous, where I am to meet Sir Thomas Acland and fresh cattle. Come with me, Colonel Lee, and let us run for it. The roundheads have beat us in battle; but if it come to a walk or a race, I think I can shew which has the best mettle."

"But then," said Albert, "we lose all the time which may otherwise be gained by the defence of this house—leaving none here but my poor father, incapable from his state of doing anything; and you will be instantly pursued by fresh horses, while ours are unfit for the road. Oh, where is the villain Joceline!"

"What can have become of Doctor Rochecliffe?" said Alice; "he that is so ready with advice;—where can they be gone? Oh, if my father could but rouse himself!"

"Your father *is* roused," said Sir Henry, rising and stepping up to them with all the energy of full manhood in his countenance and motions—"I did but gather my thoughts—for when did they fail a Lee when his King needed counsel or aid?" He then began to speak, with the ready and distinct utterance of a general at the head of an army, ordering every motion for attack and defence—unmoved himself, and his own energy compelling obedience, and that cheerful obedience, from all who heard him. "Daughter," he said, "beat up dame Jellicot—Let Phœbe rise, if she were dying, and secure doors and windows."

"That hath been done regularly since—we have been thus far honoured," said his daughter, looking at the King—"yet, let them go through the chambers

once more." And Alice retired to give the orders, and presently returned.

The old knight proceeded, in the same decided tone of promptitude and despatch—"Which is your first stage?"

"Gray's—Rothebury, by Henley, where Sir Thomas Acland and young Knolles are to have horses in readiness," said Albert; "but how to get there with our weary cattle!"

"Trust me for that," said the knight; and proceeding with the same tone of authority—"Your Majesty must instantly to Joceline's lodge," he said, "there are your horses and your means of flight. The secret places of this house, well managed, will keep the rebel dogs in play two or three hours good—Rochecliffe is, I fear, kidnapped, and his Independent hath betrayed him—Would I had judged the villain better! I would have struck him through at one of our trials of fence, with an unbated weapon, as Will says.—But for your guide when on horseback, half a bowshot from Joceline's hut is that of old Martin the verdurer; he is a score of years older than I, but as fresh as an old oak—beat up his quarters, and let him ride with you for death and life. He will guide you to your relay, for no fox that ever earthed in the Chase knows the country so well for seven leagues around."

"Excellent, my dearest father, excellent," said Albert; "I had forgot Martin the verdurer."

"Young men forget all," answered the knight—"Alas, that the limbs should fail, when the head

which can best direct them—is come perhaps to its wisest!"

"But the tired horses," said the King—"could we not get fresh cattle?"

"Impossible at this time of night," answered Sir Henry; but tired horses may do much with care and looking to." He went hastily to the cabinet which stood in one of the oriel windows, and searched for something in the drawers, pulling out one after another.

"We lose time, father," said Albert, afraid that the intelligence and energy which the old man displayed had been but a temporary flash of the lamp, which was about to relapse into evening twilight.

"Go to, sir boy," said his father, sharply; "is it for thee to tax me in this presence!—Know, that were the whole roundheads that are out of hell in present assemblage round Woodstock, I could send away the Royal Hope of England by a way that the wisest of them could never guess.—Alice, my love, ask no questions, but speed to the kitchen, and fetch a slice or two of beef, or better of venison; cut them long and thin, d'ye mark me——"

"This is wandering of the mind," said Albert apart to the King. "We do him wrong, and your Majesty harm, to listen to him."

"I think otherwise," said Alice, "and I know my father better than you." So saying, she left the room, to fulfil her father's orders.

"I think so, too," said Charles—"in Scotland the

Presbyterian ministers, when thundering in their pulpits on my own sins and those of my house, took the freedom to call me to my face Jeroboam, or Rehoboam, or some such name, for following the advice of young counsellors—Oddsfish, I will take that of the gray beard for once, for never saw I more sharpness and decision than in the countenance of that noble old man."

By this time Sir Henry had found what he was seeking. "In this tin box," he said, "are six balls prepared of the most cordial spices, mixed with medicaments of the choicest and most invigorating quality. Given from hour to hour, wrapt in a covering of good beef or venison, a horse of spirit will not flag for five hours, at the speed of fifteen miles an hour; and, please God, the fourth of the time places your Majesty in safety—what remains may be useful on some future occasion. Martin knows how to administer them; and Albert's weary cattle shall be ready, if walked gently for ten minutes, in running to devour the way, as old Will says—nay, waste not time in speech, your Majesty does me but too much honour in using what is your own. —Now, see if the coast is clear, Albert, and let his Majesty set off instantly—We will play our parts but ill, if any take the chase after him for these two hours that are between night and day—Change dresses, as you proposed, in yonder sleeping apartment—something may be made of that, too."

"But, good Sir Henry," said the King, "your zeal overlooks a principal point. I have, indeed, come from

the under-keeper's hut you mention to this place, but it was by daylight, and under guidance—I shall never find my way thither in utter darkness, and without a guide—I fear you must let the Colonel go with me; and I entreat and command, you will put yourself to no trouble or risk to defend the house—only make what delay you can in shewing its secret recesses."

"Rely on me, my royal and liege Sovereign," said Sir Henry, "but Albert *must* remain here, and Alice shall guide your Majesty to Joceline's hut in his stead."

"Alice!" said Charles, stepping back in surprise—"why, it is dark night—and—and—and—" He glanced his eye towards Alice, who had by this time returned to the apartment, and saw doubt and apprehension in her look; an intimation, that the reserve under which he had placed his disposition for gallantry, since the morning of the proposed duel, had not altogether effaced the recollection of his previous conduct. He hastened to put a strong negative upon a proposal which appeared so much to embarrass her. "It is impossible for me, indeed, Sir Henry, to use Alice's services—I must walk as if bloodhounds were at my heels."

"Alice shall trip it," said the knight, "with any wench in Oxfordshire; and what would your Majesty's best speed avail, if you knew not the way to go?"

"Nay, nay, Sir Henry," continued the King, "the night is too dark—we stay too long—I will find it myself."

"Lose no time in exchanging your dress with

Albert," said Sir Henry—"leave me to take care of the rest."

Charles, still inclined to expostulate, withdrew, however, into the apartment where young Lee and he were to exchange clothes; while Sir Henry said to his daughter, "Get thee a cloak, wench, and put on thy thickest shoes. Thou might'st have ridden Pixie, but he is something spirited, and thou art a timid horsewoman, and ever wert so—the only weakness I have known of thee."

"But, my father," said Alice, fixing her eyes very earnestly on Sir Henry's face, "must I really go along with the King? might not Phœbe, or dame Jellicot, go with us?"

"No—no—no," answered Sir Henry; "Phœbe, the silly slut, has, as you well know, been in fits to-night, and I take it, such a walk as you must take is no charm for hysterics—Dame Jellicot hobbles as slow as a broken-winded mare—besides, her deafness, were there occasion to speak to her—No—no—you shall go alone—and entitle yourself to have it written on your tomb, 'Here lies she who saved the King!'—And, hark you, do not think of returning to-night, but stay at the verdurer's with his niece—the Park and Chase will shortly be filled with our enemies, and whatever chances here you will learn early enough in the morning."

"And what is it I may then learn?" said Alice—"Alas, who can tell?—O, dearest father, let me stay and share your fate! I will pull off the timorous woman, and fight for the King, if it be necessary. But

—I cannot think of becoming his only attendant in the dark night, and through a road so lonely."

"How!" said the knight, raising his voice; "do you bring ceremonious and silly scruples forward, when the King's safety, nay his life, is at stake! By this mark of loyalty," stroking his gray beard as he spoke, "could I think thou wert other than becomes a daughter of the house of Lee, I would——"

At this moment the King and Albert interrupted him by entering the apartment, having exchanged dresses, and, from their stature, bearing some resemblance to each other, though Charles was evidently a plain, and Lee a handsome young man. Their complexions were different; but the difference could not be immediately noticed, Albert having adopted a black peruque, and darkened his eyebrows.

Albert Lee walked out to the front of the mansion, to give one turn around the Lodge, in order to discover in what direction any enemies might be approaching, that they might judge of the road which it was safest for the royal fugitive to adopt. Meanwhile the King, who was first on entering the apartment, had heard a part of the angry answer which the old knight made to his daughter, and was at no loss to guess the subject of his resentment. He walked up to him with the dignity which he perfectly knew to assume when he chose it.

"Sir Henry," he said, "it is our pleasure, nay our command, that you forbear all exertion of paternal authority in this matter. Mistress Alice, I am sure, must have good and strong reasons for what she wishes;

and I should never pardon myself were she placed in an unpleasant situation on my account. I am too well acquainted with woods and wildernesses to fear losing my way among my native oaks of Woodstock."

"Your Majesty shall not incur the danger," said Alice, her temporary hesitation entirely removed by the calm, clear, and candid manner in which Charles uttered these last words. "You shall run no risk that I can prevent; and the unhappy chances of the times in which I have lived have from experience made the forest as well known to me by night as by day. So, if you scorn not my company, let us away instantly."

"If your company is given with good-will, I accept it with gratitude," replied the monarch.

"Willingly," she said, "most willingly. Let me be one of the first to shew that zeal and that confidence, which I trust all England will one day emulously display in behalf of your Majesty."

She uttered these words with an alacrity of spirit, and made the trifling change of habit with a speed and dexterity, which shewed that all her fears were gone, and that her heart was entirely in the mission on which her father had despatched her.

"All is safe around," said Albert Lee, shewing himself; "you may take which passage you will—the most private is the best."

Charles went gracefully up to Sir Henry Lee ere his departure, and took him by the hand.—"I am too proud to make professions," he said, "which I may be too poor ever to realize. But while Charles Stuart

lives, he lives the obliged and indebted debtor of Sir Henry Lee."

"Say not so, please your Majesty, say not so," exclaimed the old man, struggling with the hysterical sobs which rose to his throat. "He who might claim all, cannot become indebted by accepting some small part."

"Farewell, good friend, farewell!" said the King; "think of me as a son, a brother to Albert and to Alice, who are, I see, already impatient. Give me a father's blessing, and let me be gone."

"The God, through whom Kings reign, bless your Majesty," said Sir Henry, kneeling and turning his reverend face and clasped hands up to Heaven—"The Lord of Hosts bless you, and save your Majesty from your present dangers, and bring you in his own good time to the safe possession of the crown that is your due!"

Charles received his blessing like that of a father, and Alice and he departed on their journey.

As they left the apartment, the old knight let his hands sink gently as he concluded this fervent ejaculation, his head sinking at the same time. His son dared not disturb his meditation, yet feared the strength of his feelings might overcome that of his constitution, and that he might fall into a swoon. At length, he ventured to approach and gradually touch him. The old knight started to his feet, and was at once the same alert, active-minded, forecasting director, which he had shewn himself a little before.

"You are right, boy," he said, "we must be up and doing. They lie, the roundheaded traitors, that call him dissolute and worthless! He hath feelings worthy the son of the blessed Martyr. You saw, even in the extremity of danger, he would have perilled his safety, rather than take Alice's guidance, when the silly wench seemed in doubt about going. Profligacy is intensely selfish, and thinks not of the feelings of others. But hast thou drawn bolt and bar after them? I vow I scarce saw when they left the hall."

"I let them out at the little postern," said the Colonel; "and when I returned, I was afraid I had found you ill."

"Joy—joy, only joy, Albert—I cannot allow a thought of doubt to cross my breast. God will not desert the descendant of an hundred kings—the rightful heir will not be given up to the ruffians. There was a tear in his eye as he took leave of me—I am sure of it. Wouldst not die for him, boy?"

"If I lay my life down for him to-night," said Albert, "I would only regret it, because I should not hear of his escape to-morrow."

"Well, let us to this gear," said the knight; "think'st thou know'st enough of his manner, clad as thou art in his dress, to induce the women to believe thee to be the page Kerneguy?"

"Umph," replied Albert, "it is not easy to bear out a personification of the King, when women are in the case. But there is only a very little light below, and I can try."

"Do so instantly," said his father; "the knaves will be here presently."

Albert accordingly left the apartment, while the knight continued—"If the women be actually persuaded that Kerneguy be still here, it will add strength to my plot—the beagles will open on a false scent, and the royal stag be safe in cover ere they regain the slot of him. Then to draw them on from hiding-place to hiding-place! Why the east will be gray before they have sought the half of them!—Yes, I will play at bob-cherry with them, hold the bait to their nose which they are never to gorge upon! I will drag a trail for them which will take them some time to puzzle out.—But at what cost do I do this?" continued the old knight, interrupting his own joyous soliloquy—"Oh, Absalom, Absalom, my son! my son!—But let him go; he can but die as his fathers have died, and in the cause for which they lived. But he comes—Hush!—Albert, hast thou succeeded? hast thou taken royalty upon thee so as to pass current?"

"I have sir," replied Albert; "the women will swear that Louis Kerneguy was in the house this very last minute."

"Right, for they are good and faithful creatures," said the knight, "and would swear what was for his Majesty's safety at any rate; yet they will do it with more nature and effect, if they believe they are swearing truth—How didst thou impress the deceit upon them?"

"By a trifling adoption of the royal manner, sir, not worth mentioning."

"Out, rogue!" replied the knight. "I fear the King's character will suffer under your mummery."

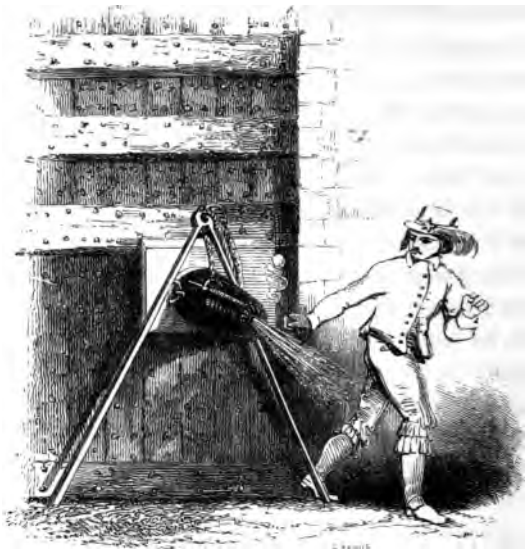
"Umph," said Albert, muttering what he dared not utter aloud—"were I to follow the example close up, I know whose character would be in the greatest danger."

"Well, now we must adjust the defence of the outworks, the signals, etc. betwixt us both, and the best way to baffle the enemy for the longest time possible." He then again had recourse to the secret drawers of his cabinet, and pulled out a piece of parchment on which was a plan. "This," said he, "is a scheme of the citadel, as I call it, which may hold out long enough after you have been forced to evacuate the places of retreat you are already acquainted with. The ranger was always sworn to keep this plan secret, save from one person only in case of sudden death.—Let us sit down and study it together."

They accordingly adjusted their measures in a manner which will better shew itself in what afterwards took place, than were we to state the various schemes which they proposed, and provisions made against events that did not arrive.

At length young Lee, armed and provided with some food and liquor, took leave of his father, and went and shut himself up in Victor Lee's apartment, from which was an opening to the labyrinth of private apartments, or hiding-places, that had served the associates so well in the fantastic tricks which they had played off at the expense of the Commissioners of the Commonwealth.

"I trust," said Sir Henry, sitting down by his desk, after having taken a tender farewell of his son, "that Rochecliffe has not blabbed out the secret of the plot to yonder fellow Tomkins, who was not unlikely to prate of it out of school.—But here am I seated—perhaps for the last time, with my Bible on the one hand, and old Will on the other, prepared, thank God, to die as I have lived.—I marvel they come not yet," he said, after waiting for some time—"I always thought the devil had a smarter spur to give his agents, when they were upon his own special service."



CHAPTER THE THIRTY-THIRD.

But see, his face is black, and full of blood;
His eyeballs farther out than when he lived,
Staring full ghastly, like a strangled man;
His hair upreared—his nostrils stretched with struggling;
His hands abroad displayed, as one who grasped
And tugged for life, and was by strength subdued.

HENRY VI. *Part I.*

HAD those whose unpleasant visit Sir Henry expected come straight to the Lodge, instead of staying for three hours at Woodstock, they would have secured their

prey. But the Familist, partly to prevent the King's escape, partly to render himself of more importance in the affair, had represented the party at the Lodge as being constantly on the alert, and had therefore inculcated upon Cromwell the necessity of his remaining quiet until he (Tomkins) should appear to give him notice that the household were retired to rest. On this condition he undertook, not only to discover the apartment in which the unfortunate Charles slept, but, if possible, to find some mode of fastening the door on the outside, so as to render flight impossible. He had also promised to secure the key of a postern, by which the soldiers might be admitted into the house without exciting alarm. Nay, the matter might, by means of his local knowledge, be managed, as he represented it, with such security, that he would undertake to place his Excellency, or whomsoever he might appoint for the service, by the side of Charles Stuart's bed, ere he had slept off the last night's claret. Above all, he had stated, that, from the style of the old house, there were many passages and posterns which must be carefully guarded, before the least alarm was caught by those within, otherwise the success of the whole enterprise might be endangered. He had therefore besought Cromwell to wait for him at the village, if he found him not there on his arrival; and assured him that the marching and countermarching of soldiers was at present so common, that even if any news were carried to the Lodge that fresh troops had arrived in the borough, so ordinary a circumstance would not give them the least

alarm. He recommended, that the soldiers chosen for this service should be such as could be depended upon—no fainters in spirit—none who turn back from Mount Gilead for fear of the Amalekites, but men of war, accustomed to strike with the sword, and to need no second blow. Finally, he represented, that it would be wisely done if the General should put Pearson, or any other officer whom he could completely trust, into the command of the detachment, and keep his own person, if he should think it proper to attend, secret even from the soldiers.

All this man's counsels Cromwell had punctually followed. He had travelled in the van of this detachment of one hundred picked soldiers, whom he had selected for the service, men of dauntless resolution, bred in a thousand dangers, and who were steeled against all feelings of hesitation and compassion, by the deep and gloomy fanaticism which was their chief principle of action—men to whom, as their General, and no less as the chief among the Elect, the commands of Oliver were like a commission from the Deity.

Great and deep was the General's mortification at the unexpected absence of the personage on whose agency he so confidently reckoned, and many conjectures he formed as to the cause of such mysterious conduct. Sometimes he thought Tomkins had been overcome by liquor, a frailty to which Cromwell knew him to be addicted; and when he held this opinion, he discharged his wrath in maledictions, which, of a different kind from the wild oaths and curses of the

cavaliers, had yet in them as much blasphemy, and more determined malevolence. At other times he thought some unexpected alarm, or perhaps some drunken cavalier revel, had caused the family of Woodstock Lodge to make later hours than usual. To this conjecture, which appeared the most probable of any, his mind often recurred; and it was the hope that Tomkins would still appear at the rendezvous, which induced him to remain at the borough, anxious to receive communication from his emissary, and afraid of endangering the success of the enterprise by any premature exertion on his own part.

In the meantime, Cromwell, finding it no longer possible to conceal his personal presence, disposed of every thing so as to be ready at a minute's notice. Half his soldiers he caused to dismount, and had the horses put into quarters; the other half were directed to keep their horses saddled, and themselves ready to mount at a moment's notice. The men were brought into the house by turns, and had some refreshment, leaving a sufficient guard on the horses, which was changed from time to time.

Thus Cromwell waited with no little uncertainty, often casting an anxious eye upon Colonel Everard, who, he suspected, could, if he chose it, well supply the place of his absent confidant. Everard endured this calmly, with unaltered countenance, and brow neither ruffled nor dejected.

Midnight at length tolled, and it became necessary to take some decisive step. Tomkins might have been

treacherous; or, a suspicion which approached more near to the reality, his intrigue might have been discovered, and he himself murdered or kidnapped, by the vengeful royalists. In a word, if any use was to be made of the chance which fortune afforded of securing the most formidable claimant of the supreme power, which he already aimed at, no farther time was to be lost. He at length gave orders to Pearson to get the men under arms—he directed him concerning the mode of forming them, and that they should march with the utmost possible silence; or as it was given out in the orders, "Even as Gideon marched in silence, when he went down against the camp of the Midianites, with only Phurah his servant. Peradventure," continued this strange document, "we too may learn of what yonder Midianites have dreamed."

A single patrol, followed by a corporal and five steady, experienced soldiers, formed the advanced guard of the party; then followed the main body. A rear-guard of ten men guarded Everard and the minister. Cromwell required the attendance of the former, as it might be necessary to examine him, or confront him with others; and he carried Master Holdenough with him, because he might escape if left behind, and perhaps raise some tumult in the village. The Presbyterians, though they not only concurred with, but led the way in the civil war, were at its conclusion highly dissatisfied with the ascendency of the military sectaries, and not to be trusted as cordial agents in any thing where their interest was concerned. The infantry being

disposed of as we have noticed, marched off from the left of their line, Cromwell and Pearson, both on foot, keeping at the head of the centre, or main body of the detachment. They were all armed with petronels, short guns similar to the modern carabine, and, like them, used by horsemen. They marched in the most profound silence and with the utmost regularity, the whole body moving like one man.

About one hundred yards behind the rearmost of the dismounted party, came the troopers who remained on horseback; and it seemed as if even the irrational animals were sensible to Cromwell's orders, for the horses did not neigh, and even appeared to place their feet on the earth cautiously, and with less noise than usual.

Their leader, full of anxious thoughts, never spoke, save to enforce by whispers his caution respecting silence, while the men, surprised and delighted to find themselves under the command of their renowned General, and destined, doubtless, for some secret service of high import, used the utmost precaution in attending to his reiterated orders.

They marched down the street of the little borough in the order we have mentioned. Few of the townsmen were abroad; and one or two, who had protracted the orgies of the evening to that unusual hour, were too happy to escape the notice of a strong party of soldiers, who often acted in the character of police, to inquire about their purpose for being under arms so late, or the route which they were pursuing.

The external gate of the Chase had, ever since the

party had arrived at Woodstock, been strictly guarded by three file of troopers, to cut off all communication between the Lodge and the town. Spitfire, Wildrake's emissary, who had often been a-bird-nesting, or on similar mischievous excursions in the forest, had evaded these men's vigilance by climbing over a breach, with which he was well acquainted, in a different part of the wall.

Between this party and the advanced guard of Cromwell's detachment, a whispered challenge was exchanged, according to the rules of discipline. The infantry entered the Park, and were followed by the cavalry, who were directed to avoid the hard road, and ride as much as possible upon the turf which bordered on the avenue. Here, too, an additional precaution was used, a file or two of foot soldiers being detached to search the woods on either hand, and make prisoner, or, in the event of resistance, put to death, any whom they might find lurking there, under what pretence soever.

Meanwhile, the weather began to shew itself as propitious to Cromwell, as he had found most incidents in the course of his successful career. The gray mist, which had hitherto obscured everything, and rendered marching in the wood embarrassing and difficult, had now given way to the moon, which, after many efforts, at length forced her way through the vapour, and hung her dim dull cresset in the heavens, which she enlightened, as the dying lamp of an anchorite does the cell in which he reposes. The party were in sight of

the front of the palace, when Holdenough whispered to Everard, as they walked near each other—"See ye not —yonder flutters the mysterious light in the turret of the incontinent Rosamond? This night will try whether the devil of the Sectaries or the devil of the Malignants shall prove the stronger. O, sing jubilee, for the kingdom of Satan is divided against itself!"

Here the divine was interrupted by a non-commissioned officer, who came hastily, yet with noiseless steps, to say, in a low stern whisper—"Silence, prisoner in the rear—silence, on pain of death."

A moment afterwards the whole party stopped their march, the word *halt* being passed from one to another, and instantly obeyed.

The cause of this interruption was the hasty return of one of the flanking party to the main body, bringing news to Cromwell that they had seen a light in the wood at some distance on the left.

"What can it be?" said Cromwell, his low stern voice, even in a whisper, making itself distinctly heard. "Does it move, or is it stationary?"

"So far as we can judge, it moveth not," answered the trooper. "Strange—there is no cottage near the spot where it is seen."

"So please your excellency it may be a device of Sathan," said Corporal Humgudgeon, snuffling through his nose; "he is mighty powerful in these parts of late."

"So please your idiocy, thou art an ass," said Cromwell; but, instantly recollecting that the corporal had

been one of the adjutators or tribunes of the common soldiers, and was therefore to be treated with suitable respect, he said, "Nevertheless, if it be the device of Satan, please it the Lord we will resist him, and the foul slave shall fly from us.—Pearson," he said, resuming his soldier-like brevity, "take four file, and see what is yonder—No—the knaves may shrink from thee. Go thou straight to the Lodge—invest it in the way we agreed, so that a bird shall not escape out of it—form an outer and an inward ring of sentinels, but give no alarm until I come. Should any attempt to escape, KILL them."—He spoke that command with terrible emphasis.—"Kill them on the spot," he repeated, "be they who or what they will. Better so than trouble the Commonwealth with prisoners."

Pearson heard, and proceeded to obey his commander's orders.

Meanwhile, the future Protector disposed the small force which remained with him in such a manner, that they should approach from different points at once the light which excited his suspicions, and gave them orders to creep as near to it as they could, taking care not to lose each other's support, and to be ready to rush in at the same moment, when he should give the sign, which was to be a loud whistle. Anxious to ascertain the truth with his own eyes, Cromwell, who had by instinct all the habits of military foresight, which, in others, are the result of professional education and long experience, advanced upon the object of his curiosity. He skulked from tree to tree with the light

step and prowling sagacity of an Indian bush-fighter; and before any of his men had approached so near as to descry them, he saw, by the lantern which was placed on the ground, two men, who had been engaged in digging what seemed to be an ill-made grave. Near them lay extended something wrapped in a deer's hide, which greatly resembled the dead body of a man. They spoke together in a low voice, yet so that their dangerous auditor could perfectly overhear what they said.

"It is done at last," said one; "the worst and hardest labour I ever did in my life. I believe there is no luck about me left. My very arms feel as if they did not belong to me; and, strange to tell, toil as hard as I would, I could not gather warmth in my limbs."

"I have warmed me enough," said Rochecliffe, breathing short with fatigue.

"But the cold lies at my heart," said Joceline; "I scarce hope ever to be warm again. It is strange, and a charm seems to be on us. Here have we been nigh two hours in doing what Diggen the sexton would have done to better purpose in half a one."

"We are wretched spadesmen enough," answered Doctor Rochecliffe. "Every man to his tools—thou to thy bugle-horn, and I to my papers in cipher.—But do not be discouraged; it is the frost on the ground, and the number of roots, which rendered our task difficult. And now, all due rights done to this unhappy man, and having read over him the service of the church, *valeat quantum*, let us lay him decently in this

place of last repose; there will be small lack of him above ground. So cheer up thy heart, man, like a soldier as thou art; we have read the service over his body; and should times permit it, we will have him removed to consecrated ground, though he is all unworthy of such favour. Here, help me to lay him in the earth; we will drag briers and thorns over the spot when we have shovelled dust upon dust; and do thou think of this chance more manfully; and remember, thy secret is in thine own keeping."

"I cannot answer for that," said Joceline. "Methinks the very night winds among the leaves will tell of what we have been doing—methinks the trees themselves will say, 'there is a dead corpse lies among our roots.' Witnesses are soon found when blood hath been spilled."

"They are so, and that right early," exclaimed Cromwell, starting from the thicket, laying hold on Joceline, and putting a pistol to his head. At any other period of his life, the forester would, even against the odds of numbers, have made a desperate resistance; but the horror he had felt at the slaughter of an old companion, although in defence of his own life, together with fatigue and surprise, had altogether unmanned him, and he was seized as easily as a sheep is secured by the butcher. Doctor Rochecliffe offered some resistance, but was presently secured by the soldiers who pressed around him.

"Look, some of you," said Cromwell, "what corpse this is upon whom these lewd sons of Belial have done

a murder—Corporal Grace-be-here Humgudgeon, see if thou knowest the face."

"I profess I do, even as I should do mine own in a mirror," snuffled the corporal, after looking on the countenance of the dead man by the help of the lantern. "Of a verity it is our trusty brother in the faith, Joseph Tomkins."

"Tomkins!" exclaimed Cromwell, springing forward and satisfying himself with a glance at the features of the corpse—"Tomkins!—and murdered, as the fracture of the temple intimates!—dogs that ye are, confess the truth—You have murdered him because you have discovered his treachery—I should say his true spirit towards the Commonwealth of England, and his hatred of those complots in which you would have engaged his honest simplicity."

"Ay," said Grace-be-here Humgudgeon, "and then to misuse his dead body with your papistical doctrines, as if you had crammed cold porridge into its cold mouth. I pray thee, General, let these men's bonds be made strong."

"Forbear, corporal," said Cromwell; "our time presses.—Friend, to you, whom I believe to be Doctor Anthony Rochecliffe by name and surname, I have to give the choice of being hanged at daybreak to-morrow, or making atonement for the murder of one of the Lord's people, by telling what thou knowest of the secrets which are in yonder house."

"Truly, sir," replied Rochecliffe, "you found me but in my duty as a clergyman, interring the dead;

and respecting answering your questions, I am determined myself, and do advise my fellow-sufferer on this occasion——"

"Remove him," said Cromwell; "I know his stiff-neckedness of old, though I have made him plough in my furrow, when he thought he was turning up his own swathe—Remove him to the rear, and bring hither the other fellow.—Come thou here—this way—closer—closer.—Corporal Grace-be-here, do thou keep thy hand upon the belt with which he is bound. We must take care of our life for the sake of this distracted country, though, lack-a-day, for its own proper worth we could peril it for a pin's point.—Now, mark me, fellow, choose betwixt buying thy life by a full confession, or being tucked presently up to one of these old oaks—How likest thou that?"

"Truly, master," answered the under-keeper, affecting more rusticity than was natural to him (for his frequent intercourse with Sir Henry Lee had partly softened and polished his manners), "I think the oak is like to bear a lusty acorn—that is all."

"Dally not with me, friend," continued Oliver; "I profess to thee in sincerity I am no trifler. What guests have you seen at yonder house called the Lodge?"

"Many a brave guest in my day, I'se warrant ye, master," said Joceline. "Ah, to see how the chimneys used to smoke some twelve years back! Ah, sir, a sniff of it would have dined a poor man."

"Out, rascal!" said the General, "dost thou jeer me? Tell me at once what guests have been of late in

the Lodge—and look thee, friend, be assured, that in rendering me this satisfaction, thou shalt not only rescue thy neck from the halter, but render also an acceptable service to the State, and one which I will see fittingly rewarded. For, truly, I am not of those who would have the rain fall only on the proud and stately plants, but rather would, so far as my poor wishes and prayers are concerned, that it should also fall upon the lowly and humble grass and corn, that the heart of the husbandman may be rejoiced, and that as the cedar of Lebanon waxes in its height, in its boughs, and in its roots, so may the humble and lowly hyssop that groweth upon the walls flourish, and—and, truly—Understand'st thou me, knave?"

"Not entirely, if it please your honour," said Joceline; "but it sounds as if you were preaching a sermon, and has a marvellous twang of doctrine with it."

"Then, in one word—thou knowest there is one Louis Kerneguy, or Carnego, or some such name, in hiding at the Lodge yonder?"

"Nay, sir," replied the under-keeper, "there have been many coming and going since Worcester-field; and how should I know who they are?—my service is out of doors, I trow."

"A thousand pounds," said Cromwell, "do I tell down to thee, if thou canst place that boy in my power."

"A thousand pounds is a marvellous matter, sir," said Joceline; "but I have more blood on my hand than I like already. I know not how the price of life may thrive—and, scape or hang, I have no mind to try."

"Away with him to the rear," said the General; "and let him not speak with his yoke-fellow yonder.—Fool that I am, to waste time in expecting to get milk from mules.—Move on towards the Lodge."

They moved with the same silence as formerly, notwithstanding the difficulties which they encountered from being unacquainted with the road and its various intricacies. At length they were challenged, in a low voice, by one of their own sentinels, two concentric circles of whom had been placed around the Lodge, so close to each other, as to preclude the possibility of an individual escaping from within. The outer guard was maintained partly by horse upon the roads and open lawn, and where the ground was broken and bushy by infantry. The inner circle was guarded by foot soldiers only. The whole were in the highest degree alert, expecting some interesting and important consequences from the unusual expedition on which they were engaged.

"Any news, Pearson?" said the General to his aide-de-camp, who came instantly to report to his superior.

He received for answer, "None."

Cromwell led his officer forward just opposite to the door of the Lodge, and there paused betwixt the circles of guards, so that their conversation could not be overheard.

"He then pursued his inquiry, demanding—"Were there any lights, any appearances of stirring—any attempt at sally—any preparation for defence?"

"All as silent as the valley of the shadow of death —Even as the vale of Jehoshaphat."

"Pshaw! tell me not of Jehoshaphat, Pearson," said Cromwell. "These words are good for others, but not for thee. Speak plainly, and like a blunt soldier as thou art. Each man hath his own mode of speech; and bluntness, not sanctity, is thine."

"Well then, nothing has been stirring," said Pearson.—"Yet peradventure——"

"Peradventure not me," said Cromwell, "or thou wilt tempt me to knock thy teeth out. I ever distrust a man when he speaks after another fashion from his own."

"Zounds! let me speak to an end," answered Pearson, "and I will speak in what language your Excellency will."

"Thy Zounds, friend," said Oliver, "sheweth little of grace, but much of sincerity. Go to then—thou knowest I love and trust thee. Hast thou kept close watch? It behoves us to know that, before giving the alarm."

"On my soul," said Pearson, "I have watched as closely as a cat at a mouse-hole. It is beyond possibility that any thing could have eluded our vigilance, or even stirred within the house, without our being aware of it."

"'Tis well," said Cromwell; "thy services shall not be forgotten, Pearson. Thou canst not preach and pray, but thou canst obey thine orders, Gilbert Pearson, and that may make amends."

"I thank your Excellency," replied Pearson; "but I beg leave to chime in with the humours of the times. A poor fellow hath no right to hold himself singular."

He paused, expecting Cromwell's orders what next was to be done, and indeed, not a little surprised that the General's active and prompt spirit had suffered him during a moment so critical to cast away a thought upon a circumstance so trivial as his officer's peculiar mode of expressing himself. He wondered still more, when, by a brighter gleam of moonshine than he had yet enjoyed, he observed that Cromwell was standing motionless, his hands supported upon his sword, which he had taken out of the belt, and his stern brows bent on the ground. He waited for some time impatiently, yet afraid to interfere, lest he should awaken this unwonted fit of ill-timed melancholy into anger and impatience. He listened to the muttering sounds which escaped from the half-opening lips of his principal, in which the words, "hard necessity," which occurred more than once, were all of which the sense could be distinguished. "My Lord General," at length he said, "time flies."

"Peace, busy fiend, and urge me not!" said Cromwell. "Think'st thou, like other fools, that I have made a paction with the devil for success, and am bound to do my work within an appointed hour, lest the spell should lose its force!"

"I only think, my Lord General," said Pearson, "that Fortune has put into your offer what you have long desired to make prize of, and that you hesitate."

Cromwell sighed deeply as he answered, "Ah, Pearson, in this troubled world, a man, who is called like me to work great things in Israel, had need to be, as the poet's feign, a thing made of hardened metal, immovable to feelings of human charities, impassible, resistless. Pearson, the world will hereafter, perchance, think of me as being such a one as I have described, 'an iron man, and made of iron mould.'—Yet they will wrong my memory—my heart is flesh, and my blood is mild as that of others. When I was a sportsman, I have wept for the gallant heron that was struck down by my hawk, and sorrowed for the hare which lay screaming under the jaws of my greyhound; and canst thou think it a light thing to me, that, the blood of this lad's father lying in some measure upon my head, I should now put in peril that of the son? They are of the kindly race of English sovereigns, and, doubtless, are adored like to demigods by those of their own party. I am called Parricide, Blood-thirsty Usurper, already, for shedding the blood of one man, that the plague might be stayed—or as Achan was slain that Israel might thereafter stand against the face of their enemies. Nevertheless, who has spoke unto me graciously since that high deed? Those who acted in the matter with me are willing that I should be the scapegoat of atonement—those who looked on and helped not, bear themselves now as if they had been borne down by violence; and while I looked that they should shout applause on me, because of the victory of Worcester, whereof the Lord had made me the poor

instrument, they looked aside to say, 'Ha! ha! the Kingkiller, the Parricide—soon shall his place be made desolate.'—Truly it is a great thing, Gilbert Pearson, to be lifted above the multitude; but when one feeleth that his exaltation is rather hailed with hate and scorn than with love and reverence—in sooth, it is still a hard matter for a mild, tender-conscienced, infirm spirit to bear—and God be my witness, that, rather than do this new need, I would shed my own best heart's-blood in a pitched field, twenty against one." Here he fell into a flood of tears, which he sometimes was wont to do. This extremity of emotion was of a singular character. It was not actually the result of penitence, and far less that of absolute hypocrisy, but arose merely from the temperature of that remarkable man, whose deep policy, and ardent enthusiasm, were intermingled with a strain of hypochondriacal passion, which often led him to exhibit scenes of this sort, though seldom, as now, when he was called to the execution of great undertakings.

Pearson, well acquainted as he was with the peculiarities of his General, was baffled and confounded by this fit of hesitation and contrition, by which his enterprising spirit appeared to be so suddenly paralysed. After a moment's silence, he said, with some dryness of manner, "if this be the case, it is a pity your Excellency came hither. Corporal Humgudgeon and I, the greatest saint and greatest sinner in your army, had done the deed, and divided the guilt and the honour betwixt us."

"Ha!" said Cromwell, as if touched to the quick, "wouldst thou take the prey from the lion?"

"If the lion behaves like a village cur," said Pearson, boldly, "who now barks and seems as if he would tear all to pieces, and now flies from a raised stick or a stone, I know not why I should fear him. If Lambert had been here, there had been less speaking and more action."

"Lambert! What of Lambert?" said Cromwell, very sharply.

"Only," said Pearson, "that I long since hesitated whether I should follow your Excellency or him—and I begin to be uncertain whether I have made the best choice, that's all."

"Lambert!" exclaimed Cromwell, impatiently, yet softening his voice, lest he should be overheard descanting on the character of his rival,—"What is Lambert?—a tulip-fancying fellow, whom nature intended for a Dutch gardener at Delft or Rotterdam. Ungrateful as thou art, what could Lambert have done for thee?"

"He would not," answered Pearson, "have stood here hesitating before a locked door, when fortune presented the means of securing, by one blow, his own fortune, and that of all who followed him."

"Thou art right, Gilbert Pearson," said Cromwell, grasping his officer's hand, and strongly pressing it. "Be the half of this bold accompt thine, whether the reckoning be on earth or heaven."

"Be the whole of it mine hereafter," said Pearson, hardily, "so your Excellency have the advantage of it

upon earth. Step back to the rear till I force the door —there may be danger, if despair induce them to make a desperate sally."

"And if they do sally, is there one of my Ironsides who fears fire or steel less than myself?" said the General. "Let ten of the most determined men follow us, two with halberts, two with petronels, the others with pistols—Let all their arms be loaded, and fire without hesitation, if there is any attempt to resist or to sally forth—Let Corporal Humgudgeon be with them, and do thou remain here, and watch against escape, as thou wouldst watch for thy salvation."

The General then struck at the door with the hilt of his sword—at first with a single blow or two, then with a reverberation of strokes that made the ancient building ring again. This noisy summons was repeated once or twice without producing the least effect.

"What can this mean?" said Cromwell; "they cannot surely have fled, and left the house empty?"

"No," replied Pearson, "I will ensure you against that; but your Excellency strikes so fiercely, you allow no time for an answer. Hark! I hear the baying of a hound, and the voice of a man who is quieting him—Shall we break in at once, or hold parley?"

"I will speak to them first," said Cromwell.—"Hollo! who is within there?"

"Who is it inquires?" answered Sir Henry Lee from the interior; "or what want you here at this dead hour?"

"We come by warrant of the Commonwealth of England," said the General.

"I must see your warrant ere I undo either bolt or latch," replied the knight; "we are enough of us to make good the castle: neither I nor my fellows will deliver it up but upon good quarter and conditions; and we will not treat for these save in fair daylight."

"Since you will not yield to our right, you must try our might," replied Cromwell. "Look to yourselves within, the door will be in the midst of you in five minutes."

"Look to yourselves without," replied the stout-hearted Sir Henry; "we will pour our shot upon you, if you attempt the least violence."

But, alas! while he assumed this bold language, his whole garrison consisted of two poor terrified women; for his son, in conformity with the plan which they had fixed upon, had withdrawn from the hall into the secret recesses of the palace.

"What can they be doing now, sir?" said Phœbe, hearing a noise as it were of a carpenter turning screw-nails, mixed with a low buzz of men talking.

"They are fixing a petard," said the knight, with great composure. "I have noted thee for a clever wench, Phœbe, and I will explain it to thee: 'Tis a metal pot, shaped much like one of the roguish knaves' own sugar-loaf hats, supposing it had narrower brims—it is charged with some few pounds of fine gunpowder. Then——"

"Gracious! we shall be all blown up!" exclaimed

Phœbe,—the word gunpowder being the only one which she understood in the knight's description.

"Not a bit, foolish girl. Pack old Dame Jellicot into the embrasure of yonder window," said the knight, "on that side of the door, and we will ensconce ourselves on this, and we shall have time to finish my explanation, for they have bungling engineers. We had a clever French fellow at Newark would have done the job in the firing of a pistol."

They had scarce got into the place of security when the knight proceeded with his description.—"The petard being formed, as I tell you, is secured with a thick and strong piece of plank, termed the madrier and the whole being suspended, or rather secured against the gate to be forced—But thou mindest me not?"

"How can I, Sir Henry," she said, "within reach of such a thing as you speak of?—O Lord! I shall go mad with very terror—we shall be crushed—blown up—in a few minutes!"

"We are secure from the explosion," replied the knight, gravely, "which will operate chiefly in a forward direction into the middle of the chamber; and from any fragments that may fly laterally, we are sufficiently guarded by this deep embrasure."

"But they will slay us when they enter," said Phœbe.

"They will give thee fair quarter, wench," said Sir Henry; "and if I do not bestow a brace of balls on that rogue engineer, it is because I would not inc

the penalty inflicted by martial law, which condemns to the edge of the sword all persons who attempt to defend an untenable post. Not that I think the rigour of the law could reach Dame Jellicot or thyself, Phœbe, considering that you carry no arms. If Alice had been here she might indeed have done somewhat, for she can use a birding-piece."

Phœbe might have appealed to her own deeds of that day, as more allied to feats of *mêlée* and battle, than any which her young lady ever acted: but she was in an agony of inexpressible terror, expecting, from the knight's account of the petard, some dreadful catastrophe, of what nature she did not justly understand, notwithstanding his liberal communication on the subject.

"They are strangely awkward at it," said Sir Henry; "little Boutirlin would have blown the house up before now. — Ah! he is a fellow would take the earth like a rabbit — if he had been here, never may I stir but he would have countermined them ere now, and

> ———'Tis sport to have the engineer
> Hoist with his own petard,

as our immortal Shakspeare has it."

"Oh Lord, the poor mad old gentleman," thought Phœbe—"Oh, sir, had you not better leave alone playbooks, and think of your end?" uttered she aloud, in sheer terror and vexation of spirit.

"If I had not made up my mind to that many days since," answered the knight, "I had not now met this hour with a free bosom—

As gentle and as jocund as to rest,
Go I to death—truth hath a quiet breast."

As he spoke, a broad glare of light flashed from without through the windows of the hall, and betwixt the strong iron stanchions with which they were secured —a broad discoloured light it was, which shed a red and dusky illumination on the old armour and weapons, as if it had been the reflection of a conflagration. Phœbe screamed aloud, and, forgetful of reverence in the moment of passion, clung close to the knight's cloak and arm, while Dame Jellicot, from her solitary niche, having the use of her eyes, though bereft of her hearing, yelled like an owl when the moon breaks out suddenly.

"Take care, good Phœbe," said the knight; "you will prevent my using my weapon if you hang upon me thus.—The bungling fools cannot fix their petard without the use of torches! Now let me take the advantage of this interval.—Remember what I told thee, and how to put off time."

"Oh, Lord—ay, sir," said Phœbe, "I will say anything. Oh, Lord, that it were but over!—Ah! ah!" —(two prolonged screams)—"I hear something hissing like a serpent."

"It is the fusee, as we martialists call it," replied the knight; "that is, Phœbe, the match which fires the petard, and which is longer or shorter according to the distance."

Here the knight's discourse was cut short by a dreadful explosion, which, as he had foretold, shattered

the door, strong as it was, to pieces, and brought down the glass clattering from the windows with all the painted heroes and heroines, who had been recorded on that fragile place of memory for centuries. The women shrieked incessantly, and were answered by the bellowing of Bevis, though shut up at a distance from the scene of action. The knight, shaking Phœbe from him with difficulty advanced into the hall to meet those who rushed in, with torches lighted, and weapons prepared.

"Death to all who resist—life to those who surrender!" exclaimed Cromwell, stamping with his foot. "Who commands this garrison?"

"Sir Henry Lee of Ditchley," answered the old knight, stepping forward; "who, having no other garrison than two weak women, is compelled to submit to what he would willingly have resisted."

"Disarm the inveterate and malignant rebel," cried Oliver. "Art thou not ashamed, sir, to detain me before the door of a house which you had no force to defend? Wearest thou so white a beard, and knowest thou not, that to refuse surrendering an indefensible post, by the martial law, deserves hanging?"

"My beard and I," said Sir Henry, "have settled that matter between us, and agree right cordially. It is better to run the risk of being hanged, like honest men, than to give up our trust like cowards and traitors."

"Ha! say'st thou?" said Cromwell; "thou hast powerful motives, I doubt not, for running thy head into a noose. But I will speak with thee by and by.

Ho! Pearson, Gilbert Pearson, take this scroll—Take the elder woman with thee—Let her guide you to the various places therein mentioned—Search every room therein set down, and arrest or slay upon the slightest resistance, whomsoever you find there. Then note those places marked as commanding points for cutting off intercourse through the mansion—the landing-places of the great staircase, the great gallery, and so forth. Use the woman civilly. The plan annexed to the scroll will point out the posts, even if she prove stupid or refractory. Meanwhile, the corporal, with a party, will bring the old man and the girl there to some apartment—the parlour, I think, called Victor Lee's, will do as well as another.—We will then be out of this stifling smell of gunpowder."

So saying, and without requiring any farther assistance or guidance, he walked towards the apartment he had named. Sir Henry had his own feelings, when he saw the unhesitating decision with which the General led the way, and which seemed to intimate a more complete acquaintance with the various localities of Woodstock than was consistent with his own present design, to engage the Commonwealth party in a fruitless search through the intricacies of the Lodge.

"I will now ask thee a few questions, old man," said the General, when they had arrived in the room; "and I warn thee, that hope of pardon for thy many and persevering efforts against the Commonwealth, can be no otherwise merited than by the most direct answers to the questions I am about to ask."

Sir Henry bowed. He would have spoken, but he felt his temper rising high, and became afraid it might be exhausted before the part he had settled to play, in order to afford the King time for his escape, should be brought to an end.

"What household have you had here, Sir Henry Lee, within these few days — what guests — what visiters? We know that your means of housekeeping are not so profuse as usual, so the catalogue cannot be burdensome to your memory."

"Far from it," replied the knight, with unusual command of temper; "my daughter, and latterly my son, have been my guests; and I have had these females, and one Joceline Joliffe, to attend upon us."

"I do not ask after the regular members of your household, but after those who have been within your gates, either as guests, or as malignant fugitives taking shelter?"

"There may have been more of both kinds, sir, than I, if it please your valour, am able to answer for," replied the knight.—"I remember my kinsman Everard was here one morning — Also, I bethink me, a follower of his, called Wildrake."

"Did you not also receive a young cavalier, called Louis Garnegey?" said Cromwell.

"I remember no such name, were I to hang for it," said the knight.

"Kerneguy, or some such word," said the General; "we will not quarrel for a sound."

"A Scotch lad called Louis Kerneguy, was a guest

of mine," said Sir Henry, "and left me this morning for Dorsetshire."

"So late!" exclaimed Cromwell, stamping with his foot—"How fate contrives to baffle us, even when she seems most favourable!—What direction did he take, old man?" continued Cromwell—"What horse did he ride—who went with him?"

"My son went with him," replied the knight; "he brought him here as the son of a Scottish lord.—I pray you, sir, to be finished with these questions; for although I owe thee, as Will Shakspeare says,

> Respect for thy great place, and let the devil
> Be sometimes honoured for his burning throne,—

yet I feel my patience wearing thin."

Cromwell here whispered to the corporal, who in turn uttered orders to two soldiers, who left the room. "Place the knight aside; we will now examine the servant damsel," said the General.—"Dost thou know," said he to Phœbe, "of the presence of one Louis Kerneguy, calling himself a Scotch page, who came here a few days since?"

"Surely, sir," she replied, "I cannot easily forget him; and I warrant no well-looking wench that comes into his way will be like to forget him either."

"Aha," said Cromwell, sayst thou so? truly I believe the woman will prove the truer witness—When did he leave this house?"

"Nay, I know nothing of his movements, not I," said Phœbe; "I am only glad to keep out of his way. But if he have actually gone hence, I am sure he was

here some two hours since, for he crossed me in the lower passage, between the hall and the kitchen."

"How did you know it was he?" demanded Cromwell.

"By a rude enough token," said Phœbe.—"La, sir, you do ask such questions!" she added, hanging down her head.

Humgudgeon here interfered, taking upon himself the freedom of a coadjutor. "Verily," he said, "if what the damsel is called to speak upon hath aught unseemly, I crave your Excellency's permission to withdraw, not desiring that my nightly meditations may be disturbed with tales of such a nature."

"Nay, your honour," said Phœbe, "I scorn the old man's words, in the way of seemliness or unseemliness either. Master Louis did but snatch a kiss, that is the truth of it, if it must be told."

Here Humgudgeon groaned deeply, while his Excellency avoided laughing with some difficulty. "Thou hast given excellent tokens, Phœbe," he said; "and if they be true, as I think they seem to be, thou shalt not lack thy reward.—And here comes our spy from the stables."

"There are not the least signs," said the trooper, "that horses have been in the stables for a month—there is no litter in the stalls, no hay in the racks, the corn-binns are empty, and the mangers are full of cobwebs."

"Ay, ay," said the old knight, "I have seen when I kept twenty good horses in these stalls, with many a groom and stable-boy to attend them."

"In the meanwhile," said Cromwell, "their present state tells little for the truth of your own story, that there were horses to-day, on which this Kerneguy and your son fled from justice."

"I did not say that the horses were kept there," said the knight. "I have horses and stables elsewhere."

"Fie, fie, for shame, for shame!" said the General; "can a white-bearded man, I ask it once more, be a false witness?"

"Faith, sir," said Sir Henry Lee, "it is a thriving trade, and I wonder not that you who live on it are so severe in prosecuting interlopers. But it is the times, and those who rule the times, that make grey-beards deceivers."

"Thou art facetious, friend, as well as daring, in thy malignancy," said Cromwell; "but credit me, I will cry quittance with you ere I am done. Whereunto lead these doors?"

"To bedrooms," answered the knight.

"Bedrooms! only to bedrooms?" said the Republican General, in a voice which indicated such was the internal occupation of his thoughts, that he had not fully understood the answer.

"Lord, sir," said the knight, "why should you make it so strange? I say these doors lead to bedrooms—to places where honest men sleep, and rogues lie awake."

"You are running up a farther account, Sir Henry," said the General; "but we will balance it once and for all."

During the whole of the scene, Cromwell, whatever

might be the internal uncertainty of his mind, maintained the most strict temperance in language and manner, just as if he had no farther interest in what was passing, than as a military man employed in discharging the duty enjoined him by his superiors. But the restraint upon his passion was but

The torrent's smoothness ere it dash below.*

The course of his resolution was hurried on even more forcibly, because no violence of expression attended or announced its current. He threw himself into a chair, with a countenance that indicated no indecision of mind, but a determination which awaited only the signal for action. Meanwhile the knight, as if resolved in nothing to forego the privileges of his rank and place, sat himself down in turn, and putting on his hat which lay on a table, regarded the General with a calm look of fearless indifference. The soldiers stood around, some holding the torches which illuminated the apartment with a lurid and sombre glare of light, the others resting upon their weapons. Phœbe, with her hands folded, her eyes turned upwards till the pupils were scarce visible, and every shade of colour banished from her ruddy cheek, stood like one in immediate apprehension of the sentence of death being pronounced, and instant execution commanded.

Heavy steps were at last heard, and Pearson and

* But mortal pleasure, what art thou in truth?
The torrent's smoothness ere it dash below.
CAMPBELL'S GERTRUDE OF WYOMING.

some of the soldiers returned. This seemed to be what Cromwell waited for. He started up, and asked hastily, "Any news, Pearson? any prisoners—any malignants slain in thy defence?"

"None, so please your Excellency," said the officer.

"And are thy sentinels all carefully placed, as Tomkins' scroll gave direction, and with fitting orders?"

"With the most deliberate care," said Pearson.

"Art thou very sure," said Cromwell, pulling him a little to one side, "that this is all well, and duly cared for? Bethink thee, that when we engage ourselves in the private communications, all will be lost should the party we look for have the means of dodging us by an escape into the more open rooms, and from thence perhaps into the forest."

"My Lord General," answered Pearson, "if placing the guards on the places pointed out in this scroll be sufficient, with the strictest orders, to stop, and, if necessary, to stab or shoot, whoever crosses their post, such orders are given to men who will not fail to execute them. If more is necessary, your Excellency has only to speak."

"No—no—no, Pearson," said the General, "thou hast done well.—This night over, and let it end but as we hope, thy reward shall not be awanting.—And now to business.—Sir Henry Lee, undo me the secret spring of yonder picture of your ancestor—Nay, spare yourself the trouble and guilt of falsehood or equivocation, and, I say, undo me that spring presently."

"When I acknowledge you for my master, and wear

your livery, I may obey your commands," answered the knight; "even then I would need first to understand them."

"Wench," said Cromwell, addressing Phœbe, "go thou undo the spring—you could do it fast enough when you aided at the gambols of the demons of Woodstock, and terrified even Mark Everard, who, I judged, had more sense."

"Oh Lord, sir, what shall I do?" said Phœbe, looking to the knight; "they know all about it. What shall I do?"

"For thy life, hold out to the last, wench! Every minute is worth a million."

"Ha! heard you that, Pearson?" said Cromwell to the officer; then, stamping with his foot, he added, "Undo the spring, or I will else use levers and wrenching-irons—Or, ha!—another petard were well bestowed —Call the engineer."

"Oh Lord, sir," cried Phœbe, "I shall never live another peter—I will open the spring."

"Do as thou wilt," said Sir Henry; "it shall profit them but little."

Whether from real agitation, or from a desire to gain time, Phœbe was some minutes ere she could get the spring to open; it was indeed secured with art, and the machinery on which it acted was concealed in the frame of the portrait. The whole, when fastened, appeared quiet motionless, and betrayed, as when examined by Colonel Everard, no external mark of its being possible to remove it. It was now withdrawn,

however, and shewed a narrow recess, with steps which ascended on one side into the thickness of the wall. Cromwell was now like a greyhound slipped from the leash with the prey in full view.—"Up," he cried, "Pearson, thou art swifter than I—Up thou next corporal." With more agility than could have been expected from his person or years, which were past the meridian of life, and exclaiming, "Before, those with the torches!" he followed the party, like an eager huntsman in the rear of his hounds, to encourage at once and direct them, as they penetrated into the labyrinth described by Doctor Rochecliffe in the "Wonders of Woodstock."

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-FOURTH.

The King, therefore, for his defence
  Against the furious Queen,
At Woodstock builded such a bower,
  As never yet was seen.
Most curiously that bower was built,
  Of stone and timber strong;
An hundred and fifty doors
  Did to this bower belong;
And they so cunningly contrived,
  With turnings round about,
That none but with a clew of thread
  Could enter in or out.

BALLAD OF FAIR ROSAMOND.

THE tradition of the country, as well as some historical evidence, confirmed the opinion that there existed,

within the old royal Lodge at Woodstock, a labyrinth, or connected series of subterranean passages, built chiefly by Henry II., for the security of his mistress, Rosamond Clifford, from the jealousy of his Queen, the celebrated Eleanor. Doctor Rochecliffe, indeed, in one of those fits of contradiction with which antiquaries are sometimes seized, was bold enough to dispute the alleged purpose of the perplexed maze of rooms and passages, with which the walls of the ancient palace were perforated; but the fact was undeniable, that in raising the fabric, some Norman architect had exerted the utmost of the complicated art, which they have often shewn elsewhere, in creating secret passages, and chambers of retreat and concealment. There were stairs, which were ascended merely, as it seemed, for the purpose of descending again—passages, which, after turning and winding for a considerable way, returned to the place where they set out—there were trapdoors and hatchways, panels and portcullises. Although Oliver was assisted by a sort of ground-plan, made out and transmitted by Joseph Tomkins, whose former employment in Doctor Rochecliffe's service had made him fully acquainted with the place, it was found imperfect; and, moreover, the most serious obstacles to their progress occurred in the shape of strong doors, party-walls, and iron grates—so that the party blundered on in the dark, uncertain whether they were not going farther from, rather than approaching, the extremity of the labyrinth. They were obliged to send for mechanics, with sledge-hammers and other instruments, to force one or two of

those doors, which resisted all other means of undoing them. Labouring along in these dusky passages, where, from time to time, they were like to be choked by the dust which their acts of violence excited, the soldiers were obliged to be relieved oftener than once, and the bulky Corporal Grace-be-here himself puffed and blew like a grampus that has got into shoal water. Cromwell alone continued, with unabated zeal, to push on his researches—to encourage the soldiers, by the exhortations which they best understood, against fainting for lack of faith—and to secure, by sentinels at proper places, possession of the ground which they had already explored. His acute and observing eye detected, with a sneering smile, the cordage and machinery by which the bed of poor Desborough had been inverted, and several remains of the various disguises, as well as private modes of access, by which Desborough, Bletson, and Harrison, had been previously imposed upon. He pointed them out to Pearson, with no farther comment than was implied in the exclamation, "The simple fools!"

But his assistants began to lose heart and be discouraged, and required all his spirits to raise theirs. He then called their attention to voices which they seemed to hear before them, and urged these as evidence that they were moving on the track of some enemy of the Commonwealth, who, for the execution of his malignant plots, had retreated into these extraordinary fastnesses.

The spirits of the men became at last downcast not-

withstanding all this encouragement. They spoke to each other in whispers, of the devils of Woodstock, who might be all the while decoying them forward to a room said to exist in the Palace, where the floor revolving on an axis, precipitated those who entered into a bottomless abyss. Humgudgeon hinted, that he had consulted the Scripture that morning by way of lot, and his fortune had been to alight on the passage, "Eutychus fell down from the third loft." The energy and authority of Cromwell, however, and the refreshment of some food and strong waters, reconciled them to pursuing their task.

Nevertheless, with all their unwearied exertions, morning dawned on the search before they had reached Doctor Rochecliffe's sitting apartment, into which, after all, they obtained entrance by a mode much more difficult than that which the Doctor himself employed. But here their ingenuity was long at fault. From the miscellaneous articles that were strewed around, and the preparations made for food and lodging, it seemed they had gained the very citadel of the labyrinth; but though various passages opened from it, they all terminated in places with which they were already acquainted, or communicated with the other parts of the house where their own sentinels assured them none had passed. Cromwell remained long in deep uncertainty. Meantime he directed Pearson to take charge of the ciphers, and more important papers which lay on the table. "Though there is little there," he said, "that I have not already known, by means of Trusty Tomkins

—Honest Joseph—for an artful and thorough-paced agent, the like of thee is not left in England."

After a considerable pause, during which he sounded with the pommel of his sword almost every stone in the building, and every plank on the floor, the General gave orders to bring the old knight and Doctor Rochecliffe to the spot, trusting that he might work out of them some explanation of the secrets of this apartment.

"So please your Excellency, to let me to deal with them," said Pearson, "who was a true soldier of fortune, and had been a buccanier in the West Indies, "I think that, by a whipcord twitched tight round their forehead, and twisted about with a pistol-but, I could make either the truth start from their lips, or the eyes from their head."

"Out upon thee, Pearson?" said Cromwell, with abhorrence; "we have no warrant for such cruelty, neither as Englishmen nor Christians. We may slay malignants as we crush noxious animals, but to torture them is a deadly sin; for it is written, 'He made them to be pitied of those who carried them captive.' Nay, I recall the order even for their examination, trusting that wisdom will be granted us without it, to discover their most secret devices."

There was a pause accordingly, during which an idea seized upon Cromwell's imagination—"Bring me hither," he said, "yonder stool;" and placing it beneath one of the windows, of which there were two so high in the wall as not to be accessible from the floor, he clambered up into the entrance of the window, which

was six or seven feet deep, corresponding with the thickness of the wall. "Come up hither, Pearson," said the General; "but ere thou comest, double the guard at the foot of the turret called Love's Ladder, and bid them bring up the other petard—So now, come thou hither."

The inferior officer, however brave in the field, was one of those whom a great height strikes with giddiness and sickness. He shrunk back from the view of the precipice, on the verge of which Cromwell was standing with complete indifference, till the General, catching the hand of his follower, pulled him forward as far as he would advance. "I think," said the General, "I have found the clew, but by this light it is no easy one? See you, we stand in the portal near the top of Rosamond's Tower; and yon turret, which rises opposite to our feet, is that which is called Love's Ladder, from which the drawbridge reached that admitted the profligate Norman tyrant to the bower of his mistress."

"True, my lord, but the drawbridge is gone," said Pearson.

"Ay, Pearson," replied the General; "but an active man might spring from the spot we stand upon to the battlements of yonder turret."

"I do not think so, my lord," said Pearson.

"What?" said Cromwell; "not if the avenger of blood were behind you with his slaughter-weapon in his hand?"

"The fear of instant death might do much," answered Pearson; "but when I look at that sheer depth on

either side, and at the empty chasm between us and yonder turret, which is, I warrant you, twelve feet distant, I confess the truth, nothing short of the most imminent danger should induce me to try. Pah—the thought makes my head grow giddy!—I tremble to see your Highness stand there, balancing yourself as if you meditated a spring into the empty air. I repeat, I would scarce stand so near the verge as does your Highness, for the rescue of my life."

"Ah, base and degenerate spirit!" said the General; "soul of mud and clay, wouldst thou not do it, and much more, for the possession of empire!—that is, peradventure," continued he, changing his tone as one who has said too much, "shouldst thou be called on to do this, that thereby becoming a great man in the tribes of Israel, thou mightest redeem the captivity of Jerusalem—ay, and it may be, work some great work for the afflicted people of this land?"

"Your Highness may feel such calls," said the officer; "but they are not for poor Gilbert Pearson, your faithful follower. You made a jest of me yesterday, when I tried to speak your language; and I am no more able to fulfil your designs than to use your mode of speech."

"But, Pearson," said Cromwell, "thou hast thrice, yea, four times, called me your Highness."

"Did I, my lord? I was not sensible of it. I crave your pardon," said the officer.

"Nay," said Oliver, "there was no offence. I do indeed stand high, and I may perchance stand higher

—though, alas, it were fitter for a simple soul like me to return to my plough and my husbandry. Nevertheless, I will not wrestle against the Supreme will, should I be called on to do yet more in that worthy cause. For surely he who hath been to our British Israel as a shield of help, and a sword of excellency, making her enemies be found liars unto her, will not give over the flock to those foolish shepherds of Westminster, who shear the sheep and feed them not, and who are in very deed hirelings, not shepherds."

"I trust to see your lordship quoit them all down stairs," answered Pearson. "But may I ask why we pursue this discourse even now, until we have secured the common enemy?"

"I will tarry no jot of time"—said the General; "fence the communication of Love's Ladder, as it is called, below, as I take it for almost certain, that the party whom we have driven from fastness to fastness during the night, has at length sprung to the top of yonder battlements from the place where we now stand. Finding the turret is guarded below, the place he has chosen for his security will prove a rat-trap, from whence there is no returning."

"There is a cask of gunpowder in this cabinet," said Pearson; "were it not better, my lord, to mine the tower, if he will not render himself, and send the whole turret with its contents one hundred feet in the air?"

"Ah, silly man," said Cromwell, striking him familiarly on the shoulder; "if thou hadst done this with-

out telling me, it had been good service. But we will first summon the turret, and then think whether the petard will serve our turn—it is but mining at last.—Blow a summons there, down below."

The trumpets rang at his bidding, till the old walls echoed from every recess and vaulted archway. Cromwell, as if he cared not to look upon the person whom he expected to appear, drew back, like a necromancer afraid of the spectre which he has evoked.

"He has come to the battlement," said Pearson to his General.

"In what dress or appearance?" answered Cromwell from within the chamber.

"A grey riding-suit, passmented with silver, russet walking-boots, a cut band, a grey hat and plume, black hair."

"It is he, it is he!" said Cromwell; "and another crowning mercy is vouchsafed!"

Meantime, Pearson and young Lee exchanged defiance from their respective posts.

"Surrender," said the former, "or we blow you up in your fastness."

"I am come of too high a race to surrender to rebels," said Albert, assuming the air with which, in such a condition, a king might have spoken.

"I bear you to witness," cried Cromwell exultingly, "he hath refused quarter. Of a surety, his blood be on his head.—One of you bring down the barrel of powder. As he loves to soar high, we will add what can be taken from the soldiers' bandoleers.—Come with

me, Pearson; thou understandest this gear.—Corporal Grace-be-here, stand thou fast on the platform of the window, where Captain Pearson and I stood but even now, and bend the point of thy partisan against any who shall attempt to pass. Thou art as strong as a bull; and I will back thee against despair itself."

"But," said the corporal, mounting reluctantly, "the place is as the pinnacle of the Temple; and it is written, that Eutychus fell down from the third loft and was taken up dead."

"Because he slept upon his post," answered Cromwell readily. "Beware thou of carelessness, and thus thy feet shall be kept from stumbling.—You four soldiers, remain here to support the corporal, if it be necessary; and you, as well as the corporal, will draw into the vaulted passage the minute the trumpets sound a retreat. It is as strong as a casemate, and you may lie there safe from the effects of the mine. Thou Zerubbabel Robins, I know wilt be their lance-prisade."*

Robins bowed, and the General departed to join those who were without.

As he reached the door of the hall, the petard was heard to explode, and he saw that it had succeeded; for the soldiers rushed, brandishing their swords and pistols, in at the postern of the turret, whose gate had been successfully forced. A thrill of exultation, but not unmingled with horror, shot across the veins of the ambitious soldier.

* "Lance-prisade," or "lance-brisade," a private appointed to a small command—a sort of temporary corporal.

"Now—now!" he cried; "they are dealing with him!"

His expectations were deceived. Pearson and the others returned disappointed, and reported they had been stopped by a strong trapdoor of grated iron, extended over the narrow stair; and they could see there was an obstacle of the same kind some ten feet higher. To remove it by force, while a desperate and well-armed man had the advantage of the steps above them, might cost many lives. "Which, lack-a-day," said the General, "it is our duty to be tender of. What dost thou advise, Gilbert Pearson?"

"We must use powder, my lord," answered Pearson, who saw his master was too modest to reserve to himself the whole merit of the proceeding—"There may be a chamber easily and conveniently formed under the foot of the stair. We have a sausage, by good luck, to form the train—and so——"

"Ah!" said Cromwell, "I know thou canst manage such gear well—But, Gilbert, I go to visit the posts, and give them orders to retire to a safe distance when the retreat is sounded. You will allow them five minutes for this purpose."

"Three is enough for any knave of them all," said Pearson. "They will be lame indeed, that require more on such a service—I ask but one, though I fire the train myself."

"Take heed," said Cromwell, "that the poor soul be listened to, if he asks quarter. It may be, he may repent him of his hardheartedness, and call for mercy."

"And mercy he shall have,"—answered Pearson, "provided he calls loud enough to make me hear him; for the explosion of that damned petard has made me as deaf as the devil's dam."

"Hush, Gilbert, hush!" said Cromwell; "you offend in your language."

"Zooks, sir, I must speak either in your way, or in my own," said Pearson, "unless I am to be dumb as well as deaf!—Away with you, my lord, to visit the posts; and you will presently hear me make some noise in the world."

Cromwell smiled gently at his aide-de-camp's petulence, patted him on the shoulder, and called him a mad fellow, walked a little way, then turned back to whisper, "What thou dost, do quickly;" then returned again towards the outer circle of guards, turning his head from time to time, as if to assure himself that the corporal to whom he had intrusted the duty still kept guard with his advanced weapon upon the terrific chasm between Rosamond's Tower and the corresponding turret. Seeing him standing on his post, the General muttered between his mustaches, "The fellow hath the strength and courage of a bear; and yonder is a post where one shall do more to keep back than an hundred in making way." He cast a last look on the gigantic figure, who stood in that airy position, like some Gothic statue, the weapon half levelled against the opposite turret, with the but rested against his right foot, his steel cap and burnished corselet glittering in the rising sun.

Cromwell then passed on to give the necessary

orders, that such sentinels as might be endangered at their present posts by the effect of the mine, should withdraw at the sound of the trumpet to the places which he pointed out to them. Never, on any occasion of his life, did he display more calmness and presence of mind. He was kind, nay, facetious with the soldiers, who adored him; and yet he resembled a volcano before the eruption commences—all peaceful and quiet without, while an hundred contradictory passions were raging in his bosom.

Corporal Humgudgeon, meanwhile, remained steady upon his post; yet, though as determined a soldier as ever fought among the redoubted regiment of Ironsides and possessed of no small share of that exalted fanaticism which lent so keen an edge to the natural courage of those stern religionists, the veteran felt his present situation to be highly uncomfortable. Within a pike's length of him arose a turret, which was about to be dispersed in massy fragments through the air; and he felt small confidence in the length of time which might be allowed for his escape from such a dangerous vicinity. The duty of constant vigilance upon his post was partly divided by this natural feeling, which induced him from time to time to bend his eyes on the mine below, instead of keeping them rivetted on the opposite turret.

At length the interest of the scene arose to the uttermost. After entering and returning from the turret, and coming out again more than once, in the course of about twenty minutes, Pearson issued, as i

might be supposed, for the last time, carrying in his hand, and uncoiling, as he went along, the sausage, or linen bag (so called from its appearance), which, strongly sewed together, and crammed with gunpowder, was to serve as a train betwixt the mine to be sprung, and the point occupied by the engineer who was to give fire. He was in the act of finally adjusting it, when the attention of the corporal on the tower became irresistibly and exclusively rivetted upon the preparations for the explosion. But while he watched the aide-de-camp drawing his pistol to give fire, and the trumpeter handling his instrument, as waiting the order to sound the retreat, fate rushed on the unhappy sentinel in a way he least expected.

Young, active, bold, and completely possessed of his presence of mind, Albert Lee, who had been from the loopholes a watchful observer of every measure which had been taken by his besiegers, had resolved to make one desperate effort for self-preservation. While the head of the sentinel on the opposite platform was turned from him, and bent rather downwards, he suddenly sprung across the chasm, though the space on which he lighted was scarce wide enough for two persons, threw the surprised soldier from his precarious stand, and jumped himself down into the chamber. The gigantic trooper went sheer down twenty feet, struck against a projecting battlement, which launched the wretched man outwards, and then fell on the earth with such tremendous force, that the head, which first touched the ground, dinted a hole in the soil of six inches in depth, and was crushed like an eggshell. Scarce

knowing what had happened, yet startled and confounded at the descent of this heavy body, which fell at no great distance from him, Pearson snapped his pistol at the train, no previous warning given; the powder caught, and the mine exploded. Had it been strongly charged with powder, many of those without might have suffered, but the explosion was only powerful enough to blow out, in a lateral direction, a part of the wall just above the foundation, sufficient, however, to destroy the equipoise of the building. Then amid a cloud of smoke, which began gradually to encircle the turret like a shroud, arising slowly from its base to its summit, it was seen to stagger and shake, by all who had courage to look steadily at a sight so dreadful. Slowly, at first, the building inclined outwards, then rushed precipitately to its base, and fell to the ground in huge fragments, the strength of its resistance shewing the excellence of the mason-work. The engineer, so soon as he had fired the train, fled in such alarm, that he well-nigh ran against his General, who was advancing towards him, while a huge stone from the summit of the building, flying farther than the rest, lighted within a yard of them.

"Thou hast been over hasty, Pearson," said Cromwell, with the greatest composure possible—"hath no one fallen in that same tower of Siloe?"

"Some one fell," said Pearson, still in great agitation, "and yonder lies his body half-buried in the rubbish."

With a quick and resolute step Cromwell approached

the spot, and exclaimed, "Pearson, thou hast ruined me—the young man hath escaped.—This is our own sentinel—plague on the idiot! Let him rot beneath the ruins which crushed him!"

A cry now resounded from the platform of Rosamond's Tower, which appeared yet taller than formerly, deprived of the neighbouring turret, which emulated, though it did not attain to its height,—"A prisoner, noble General—a prisoner—the fox whom we have chased all night is now in the snare—the Lord hath delivered him into the hand of his servants."

"Look you keep him in safe custody," exclaimed Cromwell, "and bring him presently down to the apartment from which the secret passages have their principal entrance."

"Your Excellency shall be obeyed."

The proceedings of Albert Lee, to which these exclamations related, had been unfortunate. He had dashed from the platform, as we have related, the gigantic strength of the soldier opposed to him, and had instantly jumped down into Rochecliffe's chamber. But the soldiers stationed there threw themselves upon him, and after a struggle, which was hopelessly maintained against such advantage of numbers, had thrown the young cavalier to the ground, two of them, drawn down by his strenuous exertions, falling across him. At the same moment a sharp and severe report was heard, which, like a clap of thunder in the immediate vicinity, shook all around them, till the strong and solid tower tottered like the mast of a stately vessel

when about to part by the board. In a few seconds this was followed by another sullen sound, at first low and deep, but augmenting like the roar of a cataract, as it descends, reeling, bellowing, and rushing, as if to astound both heaven and earth. So awful, indeed, was the sound of the neighbour tower as it fell, that both the captive, and those who struggled with him, continued for a minute or two passive in each other's grasp.

Albert was the first who recovered consciousness and activity. He shook off those who lay above him, and made a desperate effort to gain his feet, in which he partly succeeded. But as he had to deal with men accustomed to every species of danger, and whose energies were recovered nearly as soon as his own, he was completely secured, and his arms held down. Loyal and faithful to his trust, and resolved to sustain to the last the character which he had assumed, he exclaimed, as his struggles were finally overpowered, "Rebel villains! would you slay your king?"

"Ha, heard you that!" cried one of the soldiers to the lance-prisade, who commanded the party. "Shall I not strike this son of a wicked father under the fifth rib, even as the tyrant of Moab was smitten by Ehud with a dagger of a cubit's length?"

But Robins answered, "Be it far from us, Merciful Strickalthrow, to slay in cold blood the captive of our bow and of our spear. Methinks, since the storm of Tredagh* we have shed enough of blood—therefore, on

* Tredagh, or Drogheda, was taken by Cromwell in 1649, by storm, and the governor and whole garrison put to the sword.

your lives do him no evil; but take from him his arms, and let us bring him before the chosen Instrument, even our General, that he may do with him what is meet in his eyes."

By this time the soldier, whose exultation had made him the first to communicate the intelligence from the battlements to Cromwell, returned, and brought commands corresponding to the orders of their temporary officer; and Albert Lee, disarmed and bound, was conducted as a captive into the apartment which derived its name from the victories of his ancestor, and placed in the presence of General Cromwell.

Running over in his mind the time which had elapsed since the departure of Charles, till the siege, if it may be termed so, had terminated in his own capture, Albert had every reason to hope that his Royal Master must have had time to accomplish his escape. Yet he determined to maintain to the last a deceit, which might for a time insure the King's safety. The difference betwixt them could not, he thought, be instantly discovered, begrimed as he was with dust and smoke, and with blood issuing from some scratches received in the scuffle.

In this evil plight, but bearing himself with such dignity as was adapted to the princely character, Albert was ushered into the apartment of Victor Lee, where, in his father's own chair, reclined the triumphant enemy of the cause to which the house of Lee had been hereditarily faithful.

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-FIFTH.

A barren title hast thou bought too dear:
Why didst thou tell we that thou wert a King?
HENRY IV. *Part I.*

OLIVER CROMWELL arose from his seat as the two vet
ran soldiers, Zerubbabel Robins and Merciful Stricka
throw, introduced into the apartment the prisone
whom they held by the arms, and fixed his stern haz
eye on Albert long before he could give vent to th
ideas which were swelling in his bosom. Exultatio
was the most predominant.

"Art not thou," he at length said, "that Egyptia

which, before these days, madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness many thousand men, who were murderers?—Ha, youth! I have hunted thee from Stirling to Worcester,—from Worcester to Woodstock, and we have met at last!"

"I would," replied Albert, speaking in the character which he had assumed, "that we had met where I could have shewn thee the difference betwixt a rightful King and an ambitious Usurper!"

"Go to, young man," said Cromwell; "say rather the difference between a judge raised up for the redemption of England, and the son of those Kings whom the Lord in his anger permitted to reign over her. But we will not waste useless words. God knows that it is not of our will that we are called to such high matters, being as humble in our thoughts as we are of ourselves; and in our unassisted nature frail and foolish; and unable to render a reason but for the better spirit within us, which is not of us.—Thou art weary, young man, and thy nature requires rest and refection, being doubtless dealt with delicately, as one who hath fed on the fat, and drunk of the sweet, and who hath been clothed in purple and fine linen."

Here the General suddenly stopt, and then abruptly exclaimed—"But is this—Ah! whom have we here? These are not the locks of the swarthy lad Charles Stuart?—A cheat! a cheat!"

Albert hastily cast his eyes on a mirror which stood in the room, and perceived that a dark peruke, found among Doctor Rochecliffe's miscellaneous wardrobe, had

been disordered in the scuffle with the soldiery, and that his own light-brown hair was escaping from beneath it."

"Who is this?" said Cromwell, stamping with fury —"Pluck the disguise from him."

The soldiers did so; and bringing him at the same time towards the light, the deception could not be maintained for a moment longer, with any possibility of success. Cromwell came up to him with his teeth set, and grinding against each other as he spoke, his hands clenched, and trembling with emotion, and speaking with a voice low-pitched, bitterly and deeply emphatic, such as might have preceded a stab with his dagger.

"Thy name, young man?"

He was answered calmly and firmly, while the countenance of the speaker wore a cast of triumph, and even contempt.

"Albert Lee of Ditchley, a faithful subject of King Charles."

"I might have guessed it," said Cromwell.—"Ay, and to King Charles shalt thou go, as soon as it is noon on the dial.—Pearson," he continued, "let him be carried to the others; and let them be executed at twelve exactly."

"All, sir?" said Pearson, surprised; for Cromwell, though he at times made formidable examples, was, in general, by no means sanguinary.

"*All*"—repeated Cromwell, fixing his eye on young Lee.—"Yes, young sir, your conduct has devoted to death thy father, thy kinsman, and the stranger that

was in thine household. Such wreck hast thou brought on thy father's house."

"My father, too—my aged father" said Albert, looking upward, and endeavouring to raise his hands in the same direction, which was prevented by his bonds. "The Lord's will be done!"

"All this havoc can be saved, if," said the General, "thou wilt answer one question—Where is the young Charles Stuart, who was called King of Scotland?"

"Under Heaven's protection, and safe from thy power," was the firm and unhesitating answer of the young royalist.

"Away with him to prison!" said Cromwell; "and from thence to execution with the rest of them, as malignants taken in the fact. Let a court-martial sit on them presently."

"One word," said young Lee, as they led him from the room.

"Stop, stop," said Cromwell, with the agitation of renewed hope—"let him be heard."

"You love texts of scripture," said Albert—"Let this be the subject of your next homily—'Had Zimri peace who slew his master?'"

"Away with him," said the General; "let him die the death!—I have said it."

As Cromwell spoke these words, his aide-de-camp observed that he became unwontedly pale.

"Your Excellency is overtoiled in the public service," said Pearson; "a course of the stag in the evening will refresh you. The old knight hath a noble

hound here, if we can but get him to hunt without his master, which may be hard, as he is faithful, and—"

"Hang him up!" said Cromwell.

"What—whom—hang the noble dog? Your Excellency was wont to love a good hound?"

"It matters not," said Cromwell; "let him be killed. Is it not written, that they slew in the valley of Achor, not only the accursed Achan, with his sons and his daughters, but also his oxen and his asses, and his sheep, and every live thing belonging unto him? And even thus shall we do to the malignant family of Lee, who have aided Sisera in his flight, when Israel might have been delivered of his trouble for ever. But send out couriers and patrols—Follow, pursue, watch in every direction—Let my horse be ready at the door in five minutes, or bring me the first thou canst find."

It seemed to Pearson that this was something wildly spoken, and that the cold perspiration was standing upon the General's brow as he said it. He therefore again pressed the necessity of repose, and it would appear that nature seconded strongly the representation. Cromwell arose, and made a step or two towards the door of the apartment; but stopped, staggered, and, after a pause, sat down in a chair. "Truly, friend Pearson," he said, "this weary carcass of ours is an impediment to us, even in our most necessary business, and I am fitter to sleep than to watch, which is not my wont. Place guards, therefore, till we repose ourselves for an hour or two. Send out in every direction, and spare not for horses' flesh. Wake me if

the court-martial should require instruction, and forget not to see the sentence punctually executed on the Lees, and those who were arrested with them."

As Cromwell spoke thus, he arose and half-opened a bed-room door, when Pearson again craved pardon for asking if he had rightly understood his Excellency, that all the prisoners were to be executed.

"Have I not said it?" answered Cromwell, displeasedly. "Is it because thou art a man of blood, and hast ever been, that thou dost affect these scruples to shew thyself tenderhearted at my expense? I tell thee, that if there lack one in the full tale of execution, thine own life shall pay the forfeit."

So saying, he entered the apartment, followed by the groom of his chamber, who attended upon Pearson's summons.

When his General had retired, Pearson remained in great perplexity what he ought to do; and that from no scruples of conscience, but from uncertainty whether he might not err either in postponing, or in too hastily and too literally executing, the instructions he had received.

In the meantime, Strickalthrow and Robins had returned, after lodging Albert in prison, to the room where Pearson was still musing on his General's commands. Both these men were adjutators in their army, and old soldiers, whom Cromwell was accustomed to treat with great familiarity; so that Robins had no hesitation to ask Captain Pearson, "Whether he meant to execute the commands of the General, even to the letter?"

Pearson shook his head with an air of doubt, but added, "There was no choice left."

"Be assured," said the old man, "that if thou dost this folly, thou wilt cause Israel to sin, and that the General will not be pleased with your service. Thou knowest, and none better than thou, that Oliver, although he be like unto David the son of Jesse, in faith, and wisdom, and courage, yet there are times when the evil spirit cometh upon him as it did upon Saul, and he uttereth commands which he will not thank any one for executing."

Pearson was too good a politician to assent directly to a proposition which he could not deny—he only shook his head once more, and said that it was easy for those to talk who were not responsible, but the soldier's duty was to obey his orders, and not to judge of them.

"Very righteous truth," said Merciful Strickalthrow, a grim old Scotchman; "I marvel where our brother Zerubbabel caught up this softness of heart?"

"Why, I do but wish," said Zerubbabel, "that four or five human creatures may draw the breath of God's air for a few hours more; there can be small harm done by delaying the execution,—and the General will have some time for reflection."

"Ay," said Captain Pearson, "but I in my service must be more pointedly obsequious, than thou in thy plainness art bound to be, friend Zerubbabel."

"Then shall the coarse frieze cassock of the private soldier help the golden gaberdine of the captain to bear out the blast," said Zerubbabel. "Ay, indeed, I

can shew you warrant why we be aidful to each other in doing acts of kindness and long-suffering, seeing the best of us are poor sinful creatures, who might suffer, being called to a brief accounting."

"Of a verity you surprise me, brother Zerubbabel," said Strickalthrow; "that thou, being an old and experienced soldier, whose head hath grown gray in battle, shouldst give such advice to a young officer. Is not the General's commission to take away the wicked from the land, and to root out the Amalekite, and the Jebusite, and the Perizzite, and the Hittite, and the Girgashite, and the Amorite? and are not these men justly to be compared to the five kings, who took shelter in the cave of Makedah, who were delivered into the hands of Joshua the son of Nun? and he caused his captains and his soldiers to come near and tread on their necks—and then he smote them, and he slew them, and then he hanged them on five trees, even till evening—And thou, Gilbert Pearson by name, be not withheld from the duty which is appointed to thee, but do even as has been commanded by him who is raised up to judge and to deliver Israel; for it is written, 'cursed is he who holdeth back his sword from the slaughter.'"

Thus wrangled the two military theologians, while Pearson, much more solicitous to anticipate the wishes of Oliver than to know the will of Heaven, listened to them with great indecision and perplexity.

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-SIXTH.

But let us now, like soldiers on the watch,
Put the soul's armour on, alike prepared
For all a soldier's warfare brings.

JOANNA BAILLIE.

THE reader will recollect, that when Rochecliffe a
Joceline were made prisoners, the party which escor
them had two other captives in their train, Colo

Everard, namely, and the Rev. Nehemiah Holdenough. When Cromwell had obtained entrance into Woodstock, and commenced his search after the fugitive Prince, the prisoners were placed in what had been an old guardroom and which was by its strength well calculated to serve for a prison, and a guard was placed over them by Pearson. No light was allowed, save that of a glimmering fire of charcoal. The prisoners remained separated from each other, Colonel Everard conversing with Nehemiah Holdenough, at a distance from Doctor Rochecliffe, Sir Henry Lee, and Joceline. The party was soon after augmented by Wildrake, who was brought down to the Lodge, and thrust in with so little ceremony, that, his arms being bound, he had very nearly fallen on his nose in the middle of the prison.

"I thank you, my good friend," he said, looking back to the door, which they who had pushed him in were securing—"*Point de ceremonie*—no apology for tumbling, so we light in good company.—Save ye, save ye, gentlemen all—What, *à la mort*, and nothing stirring to keep the spirits up, and make a night on't?—the last we shall have, I take it; for a make* to a million, but we trine to the nubbing cheat† to-morrow.—Patron—noble patron, how goes it? This was but a scurvy trick of Noll, so far as you were concerned: as for me, why I might have deserved something of the kind at his hand."

"Prithee, Wildrake, sit down," said Everard; "thou art drunk—disturb us not."

* A halfpenny. † Hang on the gallows.

"Drunk? I drunk?" cried Wildrake, "I have been splicing the main-brace, as Jack says at Wapping—have been tasting Noll's brandy in a bumper to the King's health, and another to his Excellency's confusion, and another to the d——n of Parliament—and it may be one or two more, but all to devilish good toasts. But I'm not drunk."

"Prithee, friend, be not profane," said Nehemiah Holdenough.

"What, my little Presbyterian Parson, my slender Mass John? thou shalt say amen to this world instantly"—said Wildrake; "I have had a weary time in't for one.—Ha, noble Sir Henry, I kiss your hand—I tell thee, knight, the point of my Toledo was near Cromwell's heart last night, as ever a button on the breast of his doublet. Rat him, he wears secret armour—He a soldier! had it not been for a cursed steel shirt, I would have spitted him like a lark.—Ha, Doctor Rochecliffe?—thou knowest I can wield my weapon."

"Yes," replied the Doctor, "and you know I can use mine."

"I prithee be quiet, Master Wildrake," said Sir Henry.

"Nay good knight," answered Wildrake, "be somewhat more cordial with a comrade in distress. This is a different scene from the Brentford storming party. The jade Fortune has been a very step-mother to me. I will sing you a song I made on my own ill-luck."

"At this moment, Captain Wildrake, we are not in

a fitting mood for singing," said Sir Henry, civilly and gravely.

"Nay, it will aid your devotions—Egad, it sounds like a penitential psalm.

When I was a young lad,
My fortune was bad,
If e'er I do well 'tis a wonder.
I spent all my means
Amid sharpers and queens;
Then I got a commission to plunder.
I have stockings, 'tis true,
But the devil a shoe,
I am forced to wear boots in all weather,
Be d——d the boot sole,
Curse on the spur-roll,
Confounded be the upper leather."*

The door opened as Wildrake finished this stanza at the top of his voice, and in rushed a sentinel, who, greeting him by the title of a "blasphemous bellowing bull of Bashan," bestowed a severe blow, with his ramrod, on the shoulders of the songster, whose bonds permitted him no means of returning the compliment.

"Your humble servant again, sir," said Wildrake, shrugging his shoulders—"sorry I have no means of shewing my gratitude. I am bound over to keep the peace, like Captain Bobadil—Ha, knight, did you hear my bones clatter? that blow came twangingly off—the fellow might inflict the bastinado, were it in presence

* Such a song, or something very like it, may be found in Ramsay's Tea-table Miscellany, among the wild slips of minstrelsy which are there collected.

of the Grand Seignior—he has no taste for music knight—is no way moved by the 'concord of swee sounds.' I will warrant him fit for treason, stratagem and spoil—Eh?—all down in the mouth—well—I'll go to sleep to-night on a bench, as I've done many a night, and I will be ready to be hanged decently in the morning, which never happened to me before in all my life—

When I was a young lad,
My fortune was bad—

Pshaw! This is not the tune it goes to." Here he fell fast asleep, and sooner or later all his companions in misfortune followed his example.

The benches intended for the repose of the soldiers of the guard, afforded the prisoners convenience enough to lie down, though their slumbers, it may be believed, were neither sound nor undisturbed. But when daylight was but a little while broken, the explosion of gunpowder which took place, and the subsequent fall of the turret to which the mine was applied, would have awakened the Seven Sleepers, or Morpheus himself. The smoke, penetrating through the windows left them at no loss for the cause of the din.

"There went my gunpowder," said Rochecliffe "which has, I trust, blown up as many rebel villains as it might have been the means of destroying otherwise in a fair field. It must have caught fire by chance"

"By chance? No," said Sir Henry, "depend on it my bold Albert has fired the train, and that in yonder

blast Cromwell was flying towards the heaven whose battlements he will never reach—Ah, my brave boy! and perhaps thou art thyself sacrificed, like a youthful Samson among the rebellious Philistines.—But I will not be long behind thee, Albert."

Everard hastened to the door, hoping to obtain from the guard, to whom his name and rank might be known, some explanation of the noise, which seemed to announce some dreadful catastrophe.

But Nehemiah Holdenough, whose rest had been broken by the trumpet which gave signal for the explosion, appeared in the very acme of horror—"It is the trumpet of the Archangel!" he cried—"It is the crushing of this world of elements—it is the summons to the Judgment-seat! The dead are obeying the call—they are with us—they are amongst us—they arise in their bodily frames—they come to summon us!"

As he spoke, his eyes were rivetted upon Doctor Rochecliffe, who stood directly opposite to him. In rising hastily, the cap which he commonly wore, according to a custom then usual both among clergymen and gownmen of a civil profession, had escaped from his head, and carried with it the large silk patch which he probably wore for the purpose of disguise; for the cheek which was disclosed was unscarred, and the eye as good as that which was usually uncovered.

Colonel Everard returning from the door, endeavoured in vain to make Master Holdenough comprehend what he learned from the guard without, that the explosion had involved only the death of one of Cromwell's

soldiers. The Presbyterian divine continued to stare wildly at him of the Episcopal persuasion.

But Doctor Rochecliffe heard and understood the news brought by Colonel Everard, and relieved from the instant anxiety which had kept him stationary, he advanced towards the retiring Calvinist, extending his hand in the most friendly manner.

"Avoid thee—Avoid thee!" said Holdenough "the living may not join hands with the dead."

"But I," said Rochecliffe, "am as much alive as you are."

"Thou alive!—thou! Joseph Albany, whom my own eyes saw precipitated from the battlements of Clidesthrow castle?"

"Ay," answered the Doctor, "but you did not see me swim ashore on a marsh covered with sedges—*fugit ad salices*—after a manner which I will explain to you another time."

Holdenough touched his hand with doubt and uncertainty. "Thou art indeed warm and alive," he said, "and yet after so many blows, and a fall so tremendous—thou canst not be *my* Joseph Albany."

"I am Joseph Albany Rochecliffe," said the Doctor, "become so in virtue of my mother's little estate, which fines and confiscations have made an end of."

"And is it so indeed!" said Holdenough, "and have I recovered mine old chum!"

"Even so," replied Rochecliffe, by the same token I appeared to you in the Mirror Chamber—Thou wert so bold, Nehemiah, that our whole scheme would have

been shipwrecked, had I not appeared to thee in the shape of a departed friend. Yet, believe me, it went against my heart to do it."

"Ah, fie on thee, fie on thee," said Holdenough throwing himself into his arms, and clasping him to his bosom, thou wert ever a naughty wag. How couldst thou play me such a trick?—Ah, Albany dost thou remember Dr. Purefoy and Caius College?"

"Marry, do I," said the Doctor, thrusting his arm through the Presbyterian divine's, and guiding him to a seat apart from the other prisoners, who witnessed this scene with much surprise. "Remember Caius College?" said Rochecliffe, "ay, and the good ale we drank, and our parties to mother Huffcap's."

"Vanity of vanities," said Holdenough, smiling kindly at the same time, and still holding his recovered friend's arm enclosed and hand-locked in his.

"But the breaking the Principal's orchard, so cleanly done," said the Doctor; "it was the first plot I ever framed, and much work I had to prevail on thee to go into it."

"Oh, name not that iniquity," said Nehemiah, "since I may well say, as the pious Master Baxter, that these boyish offences have had their punishment in later years, inasmuch as that inordinate appetite for fruit hath produced stomachic affections under which I yet labour."

"True, true, dear Nehemiah," said Rochecliffe, "but care not for them—a dram of brandy will correct it all. Mr. Baxter was,"—he was about to say "an ass," but

checked himself, and only filled up the sentence with "a good man, I dare say, but over scrupulous."

So they sat down together the best of friends, and for half-an-hour talked with mutual delight over old college stories. By degrees they got on the politics of the day; and though then they unclasped their hands, and there occurred between them such expressions as "Nay, my dear brother," and, "there I must needs differ," and, "on this point I crave leave to think;" yet a hue and cry against the Independents and other sectarists being started, they followed like brethren in full hollo, and it was hard to guess which was most forward. Unhappily, in the course of this amicable intercourse, something was mentioned about the bishopric of Titus, which at once involved them in the doctrinal question of Church Government. Then, alas! the floodgates were opened, and they showered on each other Greek and Hebrew texts, while their eyes kindled, their cheeks glowed, their hands became clenched, and they looked more like fierce polemics about to rend each other's eyes out, than Christian divines.

Roger Wildrake, by making himself an auditor of the debate, contrived to augment its violence. He took, of course, a most decided part in a question, the merits of which were totally unknown to him. Somewhat overawed by Holdenough's ready oratory and learning, the cavalier watched with a face of anxiety the countenance of Doctor Rochecliffe; but when he saw the proud eye and steady bearing of the Episcopal champion, and heard him answer Greek with Greek, and Hebrew with Hebrew,

Wildrake backed his arguments as he closed them, with a stout rap upon the bench, and an exulting laugh in the face of the antagonist. It was with some difficulty that Sir Henry and Colonel Everard, having at length and reluctantly interfered, prevailed on the two alienated friends to adjourn their dispute, removing at the same time to a distance, and regarding each other with looks in which old friendship appeared to have totally given way to mutual animosity.

But while they sat lowering on each other, and longing to renew a contest in which each claimed the victory, Pearson entered the prison, and in a low and troubled voice, desired the persons whom it contained to prepare for instant death.

Sir Henry Lee received the doom with the stern composure which he had hitherto displayed. Colonel Everard attempted the interposition of a strong and resentful appeal to the Parliament, against the judgment of the court-martial and the General. But Pearson declined to receive or transmit any such remonstrance, and with a dejected look and mien of melancholy presage, renewed his exhortation to them to prepare for the hour of noon, and withdrew from the prison.

The operation of this intelligence on the two clerical disputants was more remarkable. They gazed for a moment on each other with eyes in which repentant kindness and a feeling of generous shame quenched every lingering feeling of resentment, and joining in the mutual exclamation—"My brother—my brother, I have sinned, I have sinned in offending thee!" they rushed

into each other's arms, shed tears as they demanded each other's forgiveness, and, like two warriors, who sacrifice a personal quarrel to discharge their duty against the common enemy, they recalled nobler ideas of their sacred character, and, assuming the part which best became them on an occasion so melancholy, began to exhort those around them to meet the doom that had been announced, with the firmness and dignity which Christianity alone can give.

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-SEVENTH.

Most gracious prince, good Cannyng cried,
Leave vengeance to our God,
And lay the iron rule aside,
Be thine the olive rod.
BALLAD OF SIR CHARLES BAWDIN.

THE hour appointed for execution had been long past, and it was about five in the evening, when the Protector summoned Pearson to his presence. He went with fear and reluctance, uncertain how he might be received. After remaining about a quarter of an hour, the aide-de-

camp returned to Victor Lee's parlour, where he found the old soldier, Zerubbabel Robins, in attendance for his return.

"How is Oliver?" said the old man, anxiously.

"Why, well," answered Pearson, "and hath asked no questions of the execution, but many concerning the reports we have been able to make regarding the flight of the young man, and is much moved at thinking he must now be beyond pursuit. Also I gave him certain papers belonging to the malignant Doctor Rochecliffe."

"Then will I venture upon him," said the adjutator; "so give me a napkin that I may look like a sewer, and fetch up the food which I directed should be in readiness."

Two troopers attended accordingly with a ration of beef, such as was distributed to the private soldiers, and dressed after their fashion—a pewter pot of ale, a trencher with salt, black pepper, and a loaf of ammunition bread. "Come with me," he said to Pearson, "and fear not—Noll loves an innocent jest." He boldly entered the General's sleeping apartment, and said aloud, "Arise, thou that art called to be a judge in Israel—let there be no more folding of the hands to sleep. Lo, I come as a sign to thee; wherefore arise, eat, drink, and let thy heart be glad within thee, for thou shalt eat with joy the food of him that laboureth in the trenches, seeing that since thou wert commander over the host, the poor sentinel hath had such provisions as I have now placed for thine own refreshment."

"Truly, brother Zerubbabel," said Cromwell, accus-

tomed to such arts of enthusiasm among his followers, "we would wish that it were so; neither is it our desire to sleep soft, nor feed more highly, than the meanest that ranks under our banners. Verily, thou hast chosen well for my refreshment, and the smell of the food is savoury in my nostrils."

He arose from the bed, on which he had lain down half dressed, and wrapping his cloak around him, sat down by the bedside, and partook heartily of the plain food which was prepared for him. While he was eating, Cromwell commanded Pearson to finish his report —"You need not desist for the presence of a worthy soldier, whose spirit is as my spirit."

"Nay, but," interrupted Robins, "you are to know that Gilbert Pearson hath not fully executed thy commands, touching a part of those malignants, all of whom should have died at noon."

"What execution—what malignants?" said Cromwell, laying down his knife and fork.

"Those in the prison here at Woodstock," answered Zerubbabel, "whom your Excellency commanded should be executed at noon, as taken in the fact of rebellion against the Commonwealth."

"Wretch!" said Cromwell, starting up and addressing Pearson, "thou hast not touched Mark Everard, in whom there was no guilt, for he was deceived by him who passed between us—neither hast thou put forth thy hand on the pragmatic Presbyterian minister, to have all those of their classes cry sacrilege, and alienate them from us for ever?"

"If your Excellency wish them to live, they live—their life and death are in the power of a word," said Pearson.

"Enfranchise them; I must gain the Presbyterian interest over to us if I can."

"Rochecliffe, the arch-plotter," said Pearson, "I thought to have executed, but——"

"Barbarous man," said Cromwell, "alike ungrateful and impolitic—wouldst thou have destroyed our decoy-duck? This doctor is but like a well, a shallow one indeed, but something deeper than the springs which discharge their secret tribute into his keeping; then come I with a pump, and suck it all up to the open air. Enlarge him, and let him have money if he wants it. I know his haunts; he can go nowhere but our eye will be upon him—But you look at each other darkly, as if you had more to say than you durst. I trust you have not done to death Sir Henry Lee?"

"No. Yet the man," replied Pearson, "is a confirmed malignant, and——"

"Ay, but he is also a noble relic of the ancient English Gentleman," said the General. "I would I knew how to win the favour of that race. But we, Pearson, whose royal robes are the armour which we wear on our bodies, and whose leading staves are our sceptres, are too newly set up to draw the respect of the proud malignants, who cannot brook to submit to less than royal lineage. Yet what can they see in the longest kingly line in Europe, save that it runs back to a successful soldier? I grudge that one man should be

honoured and followed, because he is the descendant of a victorious commander, while less honour and allegiance is paid to another, who, in personal qualities, and, in success, might emulate the founder of his rival's dynasty. Well, Sir Henry Lee lives, and shall live for me. His son, indeed, hath deserved the death which he has doubtless sustained."

"My lord," stammered Pearson, "since your Excellency has found I am right in suspending your order in so many instances, I trust you will not blame me in this also—I thought it best to await more special orders."

"Thou art in a mighty merciful humour this morning, Pearson," said Cromwell, not entirely satisfied.

"If your Excellency please, the halter is ready, and so is the provost-marshal."

"Nay, if such a bloody fellow as thou hast spared him, it would ill become me to destroy him," said the General. "But then, here is among Rochecliffe's papers the engagement of twenty desperadoes to take us off—some example ought to be made."

"My lord," said Zerubbabel, "consider now how often this young man, Albert Lee, hath been near you, nay, probably, quite close to your Excellency, in these dark passages, which he knew, and we did not. Had he been of an assassin's nature, it would have cost him but a pistol-shot, and the light of Israel was extinguished. Nay, in the unavoidable confusion which must have ensued, the sentinels quitting their posts, he might have had a fair chance of escape."

"Enough, Zerubbabel; he lives," said the General. "He shall remain in custody for some time, however, and be then banished from England. The other two are safe, of course; for you would not dream of considering such paltry fellows as fit victims for my revenge."

"One fellow, the under-keeper, called Joliffe, deserves death, however," said Pearson, "since he has frankly admitted that he slew honest Joseph Tomkins."

"He deserves a reward for saving us a labour," said Cromwell; "that Tomkins was a most double-hearted villain. I have found evidence among these papers here, that if we had lost the fight at Worcester, we should have had reason to regret that we had ever trusted Master Tomkins—it was only our success which anticipated his treachery—write us down debtor, not creditor, to Joceline, an you call him so, and to his quarterstaff."

"There remains the sacrilegious and graceless cavalier who attempted your Excellency's life last night," said Pearson.

"Nay," said the General, "that were stooping too low for revenge. His sword had no more power than had he thrusted with a tobacco-pipe. Eagles stoop not at mallards, or wildrakes either."

"Yet, sir," said Pearson, "the fellow should he punished as a libeller. The quantity of foul and pestilential abuse which we found in his pockets makes me loath he should go altogether free. Please to look at them, sir."

"A most vile hand," said Oliver, as he looked at a sheet or two of our friend Wildrake's poetical miscellanies—"The very handwriting seems to be drunk, and the very poetry not sober—What have we here?

When I was a young lad,
My fortune was bad—
If e'er I do well, 'tis a wonder—

Why, what trash is this?—and then again—

Now a plague on the poll
Of old politic Noll!
We will drink till we bring
In triumph back the King.

In truth, if it could be done that way, this poet would be a stout champion. Give the poor knave five pieces, Pearson, and bid him go sell his ballads. If he come within twenty miles of our person, though, we will have him flogged till the blood runs down to his heels."

"There remains only one sentenced person," said Pearson, "a noble wolf-hound, finer than any your Excellency saw in Ireland. He belongs to the old knight Sir Henry Lee. Should your Excellency not desire to keep the fine creature yourself, might I presume to beg that I might have leave?"

"No, Pearson," said Cromwell; "the old man, so faithful himself, shall not be deprived of his faithful dog.—I would *I* had any creature, were it but a dog, that followed me because it loved me, not for what it could make of me."

"Your Excellency is unjust to your faithful soldiers," said Zerubbabel, bluntly, "who follow you like dogs,

fight for you like dogs, and have the grave of a dog on the spot where they happen to fall."

"How now, old grumbler," said the General, "what means this change of note?"

"Corporal Humgudgeon's remains are left to moulder under the ruins of yonder tower, and Tomkins is thrust into a hole in a thicket like a beast."

"True, true," said Cromwell, "they shall be removed to the churchyard, and every soldier shall attend with cockades of sea-green and blue ribbon—Every one of the non-commissioned officers and adjutators shall have a mourning-scarf; we ourselves will lead the procession, and there shall be a proper dole of wine, burnt brandy, and rosemary. See that it is done, Pearson. After the funeral, Woodstock shall be dismantled and destroyed, that its recesses may not again afford shelter to rebels and malignants."

The commands of the General were punctually obeyed, and when the other prisoners were dismissed, Albert Lee remained for some time in custody. He went abroad after his liberation, entered in King Charles's Guards, where he was promoted by that monarch. But his fate, as we shall see hereafter, only allowed him a short, though bright career.

We return to the liberation of the other prisoners from Woodstock. The two divines, completely reconciled to each other, retreated arm in arm to the parsonage-house, formerly the residence of Doctor Rochecliffe, but which he now visited as the guest of his successor, Nehemiah Holdenough. The Presby-

terian had no sooner installed his friend under his roof, than he urged upon him an offer to partake it, and the income annexed to it, as his own. Dr. Rochecliffe was much affected, but wisely rejected the generous offer, considering the difference of their tenets on Church government, which each entertained as religiously as his creed. Another debate, though a light one, on the subject of the office of Bishops in the Primitive Church, confirmed him in his resolution. They parted the next day, and their friendship remained undisturbed by controversy till Master Holdenough's death, in 1658; a harmony which might be in some degree owing to their never meeting again after their imprisonment. Doctor Rochecliffe was restored to his living after the Restoration, and ascended from thence to high clerical preferment.

The inferior personages of the grand jail-delivery at Woodstock Lodge easily found themselves temporary accommodations in the town among old acquaintance; but no one ventured to entertain the old knight, understood to be so much under the displeasure of the ruling powers; and even the innkeeper of the George, who had been one of his tenants, scarce dared to admit him to the common privileges of a traveller, who has food and lodging for his money. Everard attended him unrequested, unpermitted, but also unforbidden. The heart of the old man had been turned once more towards him when he learned how he had behaved at the memorable rencontre at the King's Oak, and saw that he was an object of the enmity, rather

than the favour, of Cromwell. But there was another secret feeling which tended to reconcile him to his nephew—the consciousness that Everard shared with him the deep anxiety which he experienced on account of his daughter, who had not yet returned from her doubtful and perilous expedition. He felt that he himself would perhaps be unable to discover where Alice had taken refuge during the late events, or to obtain her deliverance if she was taken into custody. He wished Everard to offer him his service in making a search for her, but shame prevented his preferring the request; and Everard, who could not suspect the altered state of his uncle's mind, was afraid to make the proposal of assistance, or even to name the name of Alice.

The sun had already set—they sat looking each other in the face in silence, when the trampling of horses was heard—there was knocking at the door—there was a light step on the stair, and Alice, the subject of their anxiety, stood before them. She threw herself joyfully into her father's arms, who glanced his eye heedfully round the room, as he said in a whisper, "Is all safe?"

"Safe and out of danger, as I trust," replied Alice —"I have a token for you."

Her eye then rested on Everard—she blushed, was embarrassed, and silent.

"You need not fear your Presbyterian cousin," said the knight, with a good-humoured smile, "he has himself proved a confessor at least for loyalty, and ran the risk of being a martyr."

She pulled from her bosom the royal rescript, written on a small and soiled piece of paper, and tied round with a worsted thread instead of a seal. Such as it was, Sir Henry, ere he opened it, pressed the little packet with oriental veneration to his lips, to his heart, to his forehead; and it was not before a tear had dropt on it that he found courage to open and read the billet. It was in these words:—

"LOYAL OUR MUCH ESTEEMED FRIEND, AND OUR TRUSTY SUBJECT,

"It having become known to us that a purpose of marriage has been entertained betwixt Mrs. Alice Lee, your only daughter, and Markham Everard, Esq. of Eversly Chase, her kinsman, and by affiancy your nephew: And being assured that this match would be highly agreeable to you, had it not been for certain respects to our service, which induced you to refuse your consent thereto—We do therefore acquaint you, that, far from our affairs suffering by such an alliance, we do exhort, and, so far as we may, require you to consent to the same, as you would wish to do us good pleasure, and greatly to advance our affairs. Leaving to you, nevertheless, as becometh a Christian King, the full exercise of your own discretion concerning other obstacles to such an alliance, which may exist, independent of those connected with our service. Witness our hand, together with our thankful recollections of your good services to our late Royal Father as well as ourselves, "C. R."

Long and steadily did Sir Henry gaze on the letter, so that it might almost seem as if he were getting it by heart. He then placed it carefully in his pocketbook, and asked Alice the account of her adventures of the preceding night. They were briefly told. Their midnight walk through the Chase had been speedily and safely accomplished. Nor had the King once made the slightest relapse into the naughty Louis Kerneguy. When she had seen Charles and his attendant set off, she had taken some repose in the cottage where they parted. With the morning came news that Woodstock was occupied by soldiers, so that return thither might have led to danger, suspicion, and inquiry. Alice therefore did not attempt it, but went to a house in the neighbourhood, inhabited by a lady of established loyalty, whose husband had been major of Sir Henry Lee's regiment, and had fallen at the battle of Naseby. Mrs. Aylmer was a sensible woman, and indeed the necessities of the singular times had sharpened every one's faculties for stratagem and intrigue. She sent a faithful servant to scout about the mansion at Woodstock, who no sooner saw the prisoners dismissed and in safety, and ascertained the knight's destination for the evening, than he carried the news to his mistress, and by her orders attended Alice on horseback to join her father.

There was seldom, perhaps, an evening meal made in such absolute silence as by this embarrassed party, each occupied with their own thoughts, and at a loss how to fathom those of the others. At length the

hour came when Alice felt herself at liberty to retire to repose after a day so fatiguing. Everard handed her to the door of her apartment, and was then himself about to take leave, when, to his surprise, his uncle asked him to return, pointed to a chair, and giving him the King's letter to read, fixed his looks on him steadily during the perusal; determined that if he could discover aught short of the utmost delight in the reading, the commands of the King himself should be disobeyed, rather than Alice should be sacrificed to one who received not her hand as the greatest blessing earth had to bestow. But the features of Everard indicated joyful hope, even beyond what the father could have anticipated, yet mingled with surprise; and when he raised his eye to the knight's with timidity and doubt, a smile was on Sir Henry's countenance as he broke silence. "The King," he said, "had he no other subject in England, should dispose at will of those of the house of Lee. But methinks the family of Everard have not been so devoted of late to the crown as to comply with a mandate, inviting its heir to marry the daughter of a beggar."

"The daughter of Sir Henry Lee," said Everard, kneeling to his uncle, and perforce kissing his hand, "would grace the house of a Duke."

"The girl is well enough," said the knight proudly; "for myself, my poverty shall neither shame nor encroach on my friends. Some few pieces I have by Doctor Rochecliffe's kindness, and Joceline and I will strike out something."

"Nay, my dear uncle, you are richer than you think for," said Everard. "That part of your estate, which my father redeemed for payment of a moderate composition, is still your own, and held by trustees in your name, myself being one of them. You are only our debtor for an advance of monies, for which, if it will content you, we will count with you like usurers. My father is incapable of profiting by making a bargain on his own account for the estate of a distressed friend; and all this you would have learned long since, but that you would not—I mean, time did not serve for explanation—I mean——"

"You mean I was too hot to hear reason, Mark, and I believe it is very true. But I think we understand each other *now*. To-morrow I go with my family to Kingston, where is an old house I may still call mine. Come thither at thy leisure, Mark,—or thy best speed, as thou wilt—but come with thy father's consent."

"With my father in person," said Everard, "if you will permit."

"Be that," answered the knight, "as he and you will—I think Joceline will scarce shut the door in thy face, or Bevis growl as he did after poor Louis Kerneguy.—Nay, no more raptures, but good-night, Mark, good-night; and if thou art not tired with the fatigue of yesterday—why, if you appear here at seven in the morning, I think we must bear with your company on the Kingston road."

Once more Everard pressed the knight's hand,

caressed Bevis, who received his kindness graciously, and went home to dreams of happiness, which were realized, as far as this motley world permits, within a few months afterwards."

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-EIGHTH.

——————— My life was of a piece,
Spent in your service--dying at your feet.
DON SEBASTIAN.

YEARS rush by us like the wind. We see not whence the eddy comes, nor whitherward it is tending, and we seem ourselves to witness their flight without a sense that we are changed; and yet Time is beguiling man of his strength, as the winds rob the woods of their foliage.

After the marriage of Alice and Markham Everard, the old knight resided near them, in an ancient manor-house, belonging to the redeemed portion of his estate, where Joceline and Phœbe, now man and wife, with one or two domestics, regulated the affairs of his house-

hold. When he tired of Shakspeare and solitude, he was ever a welcome guest at his son-in-law's, where he went the more frequently that Markham had given up all concern in public affairs, disapproving of the forcible dismissal of the Parliament, and submitting to Cromwell's subsequent domination, rather as that which was the lesser evil, than as to a government which he regarded as legal. Cromwell seemed ever willing to shew himself his friend; but Everard, resenting highly the proposal to deliver up the King, which he considered as an insult to his honour, never answered such advances, and became, on the contrary, of the opinion, which was now generally prevalent in the nation, that a settled government could not be obtained without the recall of the banished family. There is no doubt that the personal kindness which he had received from Charles, rendered him the more readily disposed to such a measure. He was peremptory, however, in declining all engagements during Oliver's life, whose power he considered as too firmly fixed to be shaken by any plots which could be formed against it.

Meantime, Wildrake continued to be Everard's protected dependent as before, though sometimes the connection tended not a little to his inconvenience. That respectable person, indeed, while he remained stationary in his patron's house, or that of the old knight, discharged many little duties in the family, and won Alice's heart by his attention to the children, teaching the boys, of whom they had three, to ride, fence, toss the pike, and many similar exercises; and,

above all, filling up a great blank in her father's existence, with whom he played at chess and backgammon, or read Shakspeare, or was clerk to prayers when any sequestrated divine ventured to read the service of the Church. Or he found game for him while the old gentleman continued to go a-sporting; and, especially, he talked over the storming of Brentford, and the battles of Edgehill, Banbury, Roundway-down, and others, themes which the aged cavalier delighted in, but which he could not so well enter upon with Colonel Everard, who had gained his laurels in the Parliament service.

The assistance which he received from Wildrake's society became more necessary, after Sir Henry was deprived of his gallant and only son, who was slain in the fatal battle of Dunkirk, where, unhappily, English colours were displayed on both the contending sides, the French being then allied with Oliver, who sent to their aid a body of auxiliaries, and the troops of the banished King fighting in behalf of the Spaniards. Sir Henry received the melancholy news like an old man, that is, with more external composure than could have been anticipated. He dwelt for weeks and months on the lines forwarded by the indefatigable Doctor Rochecliffe, superscribed in small letters, C. R., and subscribed Louis Kerneguy, in which the writer conjured him to endure this inestimable loss with the greater firmness, that he had still left one son (intimating himself), who would always regard him as a father.

But in spite of this balsam, sorrow, acting imper-

ceptibly, and sucking the blood like a vampire, seemed gradually drying up the springs of life; and, without any formed illness, or outward complaint, the old man's strength and vigour gradually abated, and the ministry of Wildrake proved daily more indispensable.

It was not, however, always to be had. The cavalier was one of those happy persons whom a strong constitution, an unreflecting mind, and exuberant spirits, enable to play through their whole lives the part of a schoolboy —happy for the moment, and careless of consequences.

Once or twice every year, when he had collected a few pieces, the Cavaliero Wildrake made a start to London, where, as he described it, he went on the ramble, drank as much wine as he could come by, and led a *skeldering* life, to use his own phrase, among roystering cavaliers like himself, till by some rash speech, or wild action, he got into the Marshalsea, the Fleet, or some other prison, from which he was to be delivered at the expense of interest, money, and sometimes a little reputation.

At length Cromwell died, his son resigned the government, and the various changes which followed induced Everard, as well as many others, to adopt more active measures in the King's behalf. Everard even remitted considerable sums for his service, but with the utmost caution, and corresponding with no intermediate agent, but with the Chancellor himself, to whom he communicated much useful information upon public affairs. With all his prudence he was very nearly engaged in the ineffectual rising of Booth and Middleton

in the west, and with great difficulty escaped from the fatal consequences of that ill-timed attempt. After this, although the estate of the kingdom was trebly unsettled, yet no card seemed to turn up favourable to the royal cause, until the movement of General Monk from Scotland. Even then, it was when at the point of complete success, that the fortunes of Charles seemed at a lower ebb than ever, especially when intelligence had arrived at the little Court which he then kept in Brussels, that Monk, on arriving in London, had put himself under the orders of the Parliament.

It was at this time, and in the evening, while the King, Buckingham, Wilmot, and some other gallants of his wandering Court, were engaged in a convivial party, that the Chancellor (Clarendon) suddenly craved audience, and, entering with less ceremony than he would have done at another time, announced extraordinary news. For the messenger, he said, he could say nothing, saving that he appeared to have drunk much and slept little; but that he had brought a sure token of credence from a man for whose faith he would venture his life. The King demanded to see the messenger himself.

A man entered, with something the manners of a gentleman, and more those of a rakehelly debauchee—his eyes swelled and inflamed—his gait disordered and stumbling, partly through lack of sleep, partly through the means he had taken to support his fatigue. He staggered without ceremony to the head of the table, seized the King's hand, which he mumbled like a piece of gingerbread; while Charles, who began to recollect

him from his mode of salutation, was not very much pleased that their meeting should have taken place before so many witnesses.

"I bring good news," said the uncouth messenger, "glorious news!—the King shall enjoy his own again! —My feet are beautiful on the mountains. Gad, I have lived with Presbyterians till I have caught their language—but we are all one man's children now—all your Majesty's poor babes. The Rump is all ruined in London—Bonfires flaming, music playing, rumps roasting, healths drinking, London in a blaze of light from the Strand to Rotherhithe—tankards clattering——"

"We can guess at that," said the Duke of Buckingham.

"My old friend Mark Everard sent me off with the news—I'm a villain if I've slept since. Your Majesty recollects me I am sure. Your Majesty remembers, sa —sa—at the King's Oak, at Woodstock?—

> O, we'll dance, and sing, and play,
> For 't will be a joyous day
> When the King shall enjoy his own again."

"Master Wildrake, I remember you well," said the King. "I trust the good news is certain?"

"Certain! your Majesty; did I not hear the bells? —did I not see the bonfires?—did I not drink your Majesty's health so often, that my legs would scarce carry me to the wharf? It is as certain as that I am poor Roger Wildrake of Squattlesea-mere, Lincoln."

The Duke of Buckingham here whispered to the King, "I have always suspected your Majesty kept odd company during the escape from Worcester, but this seems a rare sample."

"Why, pretty much like yourself, and other company I have kept here so many years—as stout a heart, as empty a head," said Charles—"as much lace, though somewhat tarnished, as much brass on the brow, and nearly as much copper in the pocket."

"I would your Majesty would intrust this messenger of good news with me, to get the truth out of him," said Buckingham.

"Thank your Grace," replied the King; "but he has a will as well as yourself, and such seldom agree. My Lord Chancellor hath wisdom, and to that we must trust ourselves.—Master Wildrake, you will go with my Lord Chancellor, who will bring us a report of your tidings; meantime, I assure you that you shall be no loser for being the first messenger of good news." So saying, he gave a signal to the Chancellor to take away Wildrake, whom he judged, in his present humour, to be not unlikely to communicate some former passages at Woodstock, which might rather entertain than edify the wits of his court.

Corroboration of the joyful intelligence soon arrived, and Wildrake was presented with a handsome gratuity and small pension, which, by the King's special desire, had no duty whatever attached to it.

Shortly afterwards, all England was engaged in chorusing his favourite ditty—

Oh, the twenty-ninth of May,
It was a glorious day,
When the King did enjoy his own again.

On that memorable day, the King prepared to make his progress from Rochester to London, with a reception on the part of his subjects so unanimously cordial, as made him say gaily, it must have been his own fault to stay so long away from a country where his arrival gave so much joy. On horseback, betwixt his brothers, the Dukes of York and Gloucester, the Restored Monarch trode slowly over roads strewn with flowers —by conduits running wine, under triumphal arches, and through streets hung with tapestry. There were citizens in various bands, some arrayed in coats of black velvet, with gold chains: some in military suits of cloth of gold, or cloth of silver, followed by all those craftsmen, who, having hooted the father from Whitehall, had now come to shout the son into possession of his ancestral palace. On his progress through Blackheath, he passed that army, which, so long formidable to England herself, as well as to Europe, had been the means of restoring the Monarchy, which their own hands had destroyed. As the King passed the last files of this formidable host, he came to an open part of the heath, where many persons of quality, with others of inferior rank, had stationed themselves to gratulate him as he passed towards the capital.

There was one group, however, which attracted peculiar attention from those around, on account of the respect shewn to the party by the soldiers who kept the

ground, and who, whether Cavaliers or Roundheads, seemed to contest emulously which should contribute most to their accommodation; for both the elder and younger gentlemen of the party had been distinguished in the Civil War.

It was a family group, of which the principal figure was an old man seated in a chair, having a complacent smile on his face, and a tear swelling to his eye, as he saw the banners wave on in interminable succession, and heard the multitude shouting the long silenced acclamation, "God save King Charles!" His cheek was ashy pale, and his long beard bleached like the thistle down; his blue eye was cloudless, yet it was obvious that its vision was failing. His motions were feeble, and he spoke little, except when he answered the prattle of his grandchildren, or asked a question of his daughter, who sat beside him, matured in matronly beauty, or of Colonel Everard who stood behind. There, too, the stout yeoman, Joceline Joliffe, still in his silvan dress, leaned, like a second Benaiah, on the quarterstaff that had done the King good service in its day, and his wife, a buxom matron as she had been a pretty maiden, laughed at her own consequence; and ever and anon joined her shrill notes to the stentorian halloo which her husband added to the general exclamation.

Three fine boys and two pretty girls prattled around their grandfather, who made them such answers as suited their age, and repeatedly passed his withered hand over the fair locks of the little darlings, while Alice, assisted by Wildrake (blazing in a splendid dress,

and his eyes washed with only a single cup of canary), took off the children's attention from time to time, lest they should weary their grandfather. We must not omit one other remarkable figure in the group—a gigantic dog, which bore the signs of being at the extremity of canine life, being perhaps fifteen or sixteen years old. But though exhibiting the ruin only of his former appearance, his eyes dim, his joints stiff, his head slouched down, and his gallant carriage and graceful motions exchanged for a stiff, rheumatic, hobbling gait, the noble hound had lost none of his instinctive fondness for his master. To lie by Sir Henry's feet in the summer or by the fire in winter, to raise his head to look on him, to lick his withered hand or his shrivelled cheek from time to time, seemed now all that Bevis lived for.

Three or four livery servants attended to protect this group from the thronging multitude; but it needed not. The high respectability and unpretending simplicity of their appearance gave them, even in the eyes of the coarsest of the people, an air of patriarchal dignity, which commanded general regard; and they sat upon the bank which they had chosen for their station by the way-side, as undisturbed as if they had been in their own park.

And now the distant clarions announced the Royal Presence. Onward came pursuivant and trumpet—onward came plumes and cloth of gold, and waving standards displayed, and swords gleaming to the sun; and at length, heading a group of the noblest in England, and supported by his royal brothers on either side,

onward came King Charles. He had already ha more than once, in kindness perhaps as well as po to exchange a word with persons whom he recogn among the spectators, and the shouts of the bystan applauded a courtesy which seemed so well tu But when he had gazed an instant on the party have described, it was impossible, if even Alice been too much changed to be recognised, not insta to know Bevis and his venerable master. The mon sprung from his horse, and walked instantly up to old knight, amid thundering acclamations which from the multitudes around, when they saw Ch with his own hand oppose the feeble attempts of old man to rise to do him homage. Gently repla him on his seat—"Bless," he said, "father—l your son, who has returned in safety, as you ble him when he departed in danger."

"May God bless—and preserve"—muttered old man, overcome by his feelings; and the King give him a few moments' repose, turned to Alice—

"And you," he said, "my fair guide, how have been employed since our perilous night walk? B need not ask," glancing round—"in the service King and Kingdom, bringing up subjects as loya their ancestors.—A fair lineage, by my faith, an beautiful sight to the eye of an English King Colonel Everard, we shall see you, I trust, at Wh hall?" Here he nodded to Wildrake. "And th Joceline, thou canst hold thy quarter-staff with hand sure?—Thrust forward the other palm."

Looking down in sheer bashfulness, Joceline, like a bull about to push, extended to the King, over his lady's shoulder, a hand as broad and hard as a wooden trencher, which the King filled with gold coins. "Buy a headgear for my friend Phœbe with some of these," said Charles; "she too has been doing her duty to Old England."

The King then turned once more to the Knight, who seemed making an effort to speak. He took his aged hand in both his own, and stooped his head towards him to catch his accents, while the old man, detaining him with the other hand, said something faltering, of which Charles could only catch the quotation—

> Unthread the rude eye of rebellion,
> And welcome home again discarded faith.

Extricating himself, therefore, as gently as possible, from a scene which began to grow painfully embarrassing, the good-natured King said, speaking with unusual distinctness to insure the old man's comprehending him, "This is something too public a place for all we have to say. But if you come not soon to see King Charles at Whitehall, he will send down Louis Kerneguy to visit you, that you may see how rational that mischievous lad is become since his travels."

So saying, he once more pressed affectionately the old man's hand, bowed to Alice and all around, and withdrew; Sir Henry Lee listening with a smile, which shewed he comprehended the gracious tendency

of what had been said. The old man leaned back on his seat, and muttered the *Nunc dimittas.*

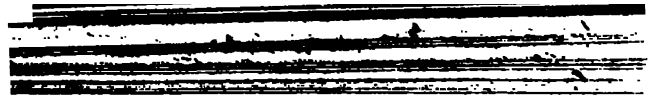
"Excuse me for having made you wait, my lords," said the King, as he mounted his horse; "Indeed, had it not been for these good folks, you might have waited for me long enough to little purpose.—Move on, sirs."

The array moved on accordingly; the sound of trumpets and drums again rose amid the acclamations, which had been silent while the king stopped; while the effect of the whole procession resuming its motion, was so splendidly dazzling, that even Alice's anxiety about her father's health was for a moment suspended, while her eye followed the long line of varied brilliancy that proceeded over the heath. When she looked again at Sir Henry, she was startled to see that his cheek, which had gained some colour during his conversation with the King, had relapsed into earthly paleness; that his eyes were closed, and opened not again; and that his features expressed, amid their quietude, a rigidity which is not that of sleep. They ran to his assistance, but it was too late. The light that burned so low in the socket, had leaped up, and expired, in one exhilarating flash.

The rest must be conceived. I have only to add that his faithful dog did not survive him many days; and that the image of Bevis lies carved at his master's feet, on the tomb which was erected to the memory of Sir Henry Lee of Ditchley.*

* It may interest some readers to know that Bevis, the gallant hound, one of the handsomest and active of the ancient Highland

deer-hounds, had his prototype in a dog called Maida, the gift of the late Chief of Glengarry to the author. A beautiful sketch of him was made by Edwin Landseer, and afterwards engraved. I cannot suppress the avowal of some personal vanity when I mention that a friend, going through Munich, picked up a common snuffbox, such as are sold for one franc, on which was displayed the form of this veteran favourite, simply marked as Der lieblung hund von Walter Scott. Mr. Landseer's painting is at Blair-Adam, the property of my venerable friend, the Right Honourable Lord Chief Commissioner Adam.



NOTES TO VOLUME XL.

NOTE A, p. 36. CANNIBALISM IMPUTED TO THE CAVALIERS.

The terrors preceding the civil wars, which agitated the public mind, rendered the grossest and most exaggerated falsehoods current among the people. When Charles I. appointed Sir Thomas Lunsford to the situation of Lord Lieutenant of the Tower, the celebrated John Lillburn takes to himself the credit of exciting the public hatred against this officer and Lord Digby, as pitiless bravoes of the most bloody-minded description, from whom the people were to expect nothing but bloodshed and massacre. Of Sir Thomas Lunsford, in particular, it was reported that his favourite food was the flesh of children, and he was painted like an ogre in the act of cutting a child into steaks and broiling them. The colonel fell at the siege of Bristol in 1643, but the same calumny pursued his remains, and the credulous multitude were told,

> The post who came from Coventry,
> Riding in a red rocket,
> Did tidings tell how Lunsford fell,
> *A child's hand in his pocket.*

Many allusions to this report, as well as to the credulity of those who believed it, may be found in the satires and lampoons of the time, although, says Dr. Grey, Lunsford was a man of great sobriety, industry and courage. Butler says, that the preachers

> Made children with their lives to run for 't,
> As bad as Bloodybones or Lunsford.

But this extraordinary report is chiefly insisted upon in a comedy called the *Old Troop*, written by John Lacy the comedian. The scene is laid during the civil wars of England, and the persons of the drama are chiefly those who were in arms for the king. They are represented as plundering the country without mercy, which Lacy might draw from the life, having, in fact, begun his career as a lieutenant of cavalry in the service of Charles I. The troopers find the peasants loath to surrender to them their provisions, on which, in order to compel them, they pretend to be in earnest in the purpose of eating the children. A scene of coarse but humorous comedy is then introduced, which Dean Swift had not, perhaps, forgotten, when he recommended the eating of the children of the poor as a mode of relieving the distresses of their parents.

"*Lieutenant.* Second me, and I'll make them bring out all they have, I warrant you. Do but talk as if we used to eat children.—Why, look you, good woman, we do believe you are poor, so we'll make a shift with our old diet—you have children in the town?

"*Woman.* Why do you ask, sir?

"*Lieutenant.* Only have two or three to supper. Fleaflint, you have the best way of cooking children.

"*Fleaflint.* I can powder them to make you taste your liquor. I am never without a dried child's tongue or ham.

"*Woman.* O! bless me!

"*Fleaflint.* Mine's but the ordinary way; but Foordfarm is the man; he makes you the savouriest pie of a child chaldron that was ever eat.

"*Lieutenant.* A plague! all the world cannot cook a child like Mr. Raggou [a French cook or messman to the troop, and the buffoon of the piece].

"*Raggou.* Begar me think so; for vat was me bred in the King of Mogol's kitchen? dere we kill twenty shild of a day. Take you one shild by both his two heels, and put his head between your two knees, and take your knife and slice off all buttocks,—so fashion; begar, that make a de best Scots collop in de world.

"*Lieutenant.* Ah, he makes the best pottage of a child's head and feet, however; but you must boil it with bacon—Woman, you must get bacon.

"*Woman.* O Lud—yes, sir!

"*Ford.* And then it must be very young.

"*Lieutenant.* Yes, yes—Good woman, it must be a fine squab child, of half a year old—a man child, dost hear?"—THE OLD TROOP, *Act III.*

After a good deal more to this purpose, the villagers determine to carry forth their sheep, poultry, etc. to save their children. In the meantime, the Cavaliers are in some danger of being cross-bit, as they then called it; that is, caught in their own snare. A woman enters, who announces herself thus:—

"*Woman.* By your leave, your good worships, I have made bold to bring you in some provisions.

"*Ford.* Provisions! where, where is this provision?

"*Woman.* Here, if it please you, I have brought you a couple of fine fleshy children.

"*Cornet.* Was ever such a horrid woman! what shall we do?

"*Woman.* Truly, gentlemen, they are fine squab children: shall I turn them up?—they have the bravest brawn and buttocks.

"*Lieutenant.* No, no; but, woman, art thou not troubled to part with thy children?

"*Woman.* Alas, sir, they are none of mine, they are only nurse children.

"*Lieutenant.* What a beast is this—whose children are they?

"*Woman.* A laundress that owes me for a year's nursing; I hope they'll prove excellent meat; they are twins too.

"*Raggou.* Aha, but! but begar we never eat no twin shild, the law forbid that."—*Ibidem.*

In this manner the Cavaliers escape from the embarrassing consequences of their own stratagem, which, as the reader will perceive has been made use of in the text.

NOTE B, p. 264. PATRICK CAREY.

"You do not know Patrick Carey," says King Charles in the novel; and, what is more singular, Patrick Carey has had two editors, each unknown alike to the other, except by name only. In 1771, Mr. John Murray published Carey's poems, from a

collection said to be in the hands of the Rev. Mr. Pierspoint Crimp. A very probable conjecture is stated, that the author was only known to private friendship. As late as 1819, the Author of Waverley, ignorant of the edition of 1771, published a second quarto from an elaborate manuscript, though in bad order, apparently the autograph of the first. Of Carey, the second editor, like the first, only knew the name and the spirit of the verses. He has since been enabled to ascertain that the poetic cavalier was a younger brother of the celebrated Henry Lord Carey, who fell at the battle of Newbery, and escaped the researches of Horace Walpole, to whose list of noble authors he would have been an important addition. So completely has the fame of the great Lord Falkland eclipsed that of his brothers, that this brother Patrick has been overlooked even by genealogists.

NOTE C, p. 279. SIGNAL OF DANGER BY THE TOKEN OF A FEATHER.

On a particular occasion a lady, suspecting, by the passage of a body of guards through her estate, that the arrest of her neighbour, Patrick Home of Polwarth, afterwards first Earl of Marchmont, was designed, sent him a feather by a shepherd boy, whom she dared not trust with a more explicit message. Danger sharpens the intellect, and this hint was the commencement of those romantic adventures which gave Grizzel Lady Murray the materials from which she compiled her account of her grandfather's escape, published by Mr. Thomas Thomson, Deputy Register of Scotland. The anecdote of the feather does not occur there, but the author has often heard it from the late Lady Diana Scott, the lineal descendant and representative of Patrick Earl of Marchmont.

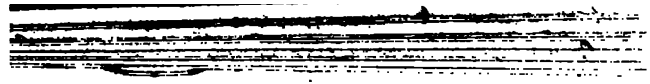
END OF WOODSTOCK.

PRINTED BY R. AND R. CLARK, EDINBURGH.

Where... ondemned of High treason
and of... Hee to be putt to death by the
severin... are therefore to will and ~ ~
require... bring the Thirtieth --day of
this in... afternoone of the same ~
day re... quire All Officers and Souldiers
and oth... ven under { hands and
Seal...

[illegible]

Jo. Bradshawe
Tho Grey
O Cromwell
Edw. Whalley

Symon Mayne
Tho Horton
J Jones
John Moore
Gilbt Millington
G Fleetwood
J Alured
Robt Lilburne
Will Say
Anth Stapley
Gre Norton
Tho Challoner

Tho Wogan
John Venn
Gregory Clement
Jo. Downes
Tho Wayte
Tho Scot
Jo. Carew
Miles Corbet